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AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY

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PREFACE

A TEXT-BOOK of literature is only a guide-book, which should always supplement, but never supersede, the literature itself. It should present a systematic plan of study, and furnish a brief account of the growth of literature as a part of national history, with such biographical and critical material as is necessary to make the interpretation of texts intelligible, interesting, and profitable. Such a guide-book is intended in this text-book of American literature.

It will be seen at once that there is an unusual apportionment of space. The more recent literature, which is generally dismissed in a few final paragraphs, or ignored altogether, here receives liberal treatment. A prominence corresponding to its acknowledged interest and value is given to Southern literature, and an attempt is made to do justice to our historians.

A class in literature should do much more than the work of the class-room; therefore two lists of selections are provided for each important author, one for critical study, the other for rapid outside reading;

the two should be used together, even though time will not permit the completion of both. Also judicious and definite selections from the biography and criticism should be made for the class by the teacher. It is hoped that the lists for the historical background will lead to a closer correlation of literature and history than is usually secured. The lists of illustrative literature are merely suggestive of the valuable material that any well-equipped teacher can provide. The books included in the list at the end of the volume constitute an adequate and fairly complete library of biography and criticism for American literature. One hundred of these books, at least, should be possessed by every school.

The method of judging authors by their peers, by means of brief and pithy quotations embodied in the text, will, it is believed, prove of special interest and value to the student. The author's acknowledgments are due to the many authors and publishers from whose books he has made excerpts for this purpose.

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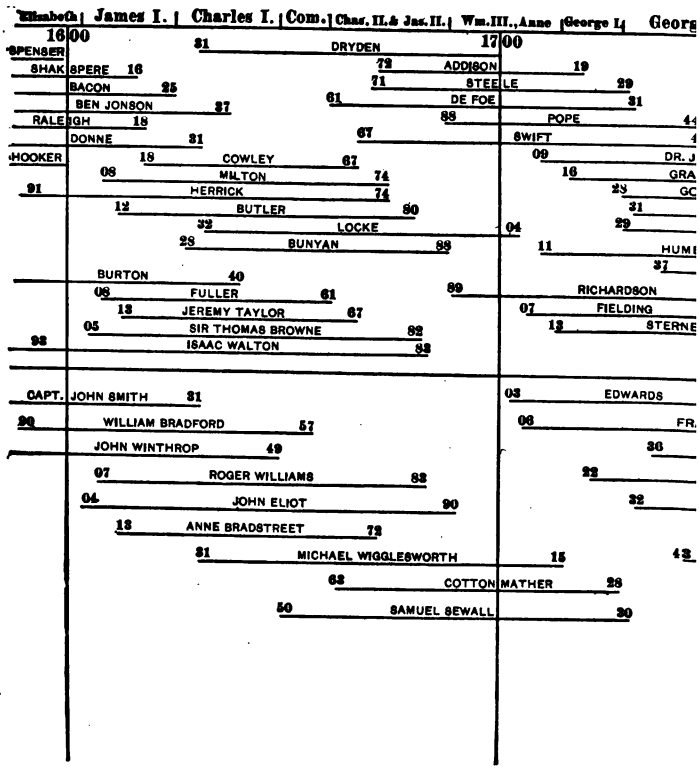
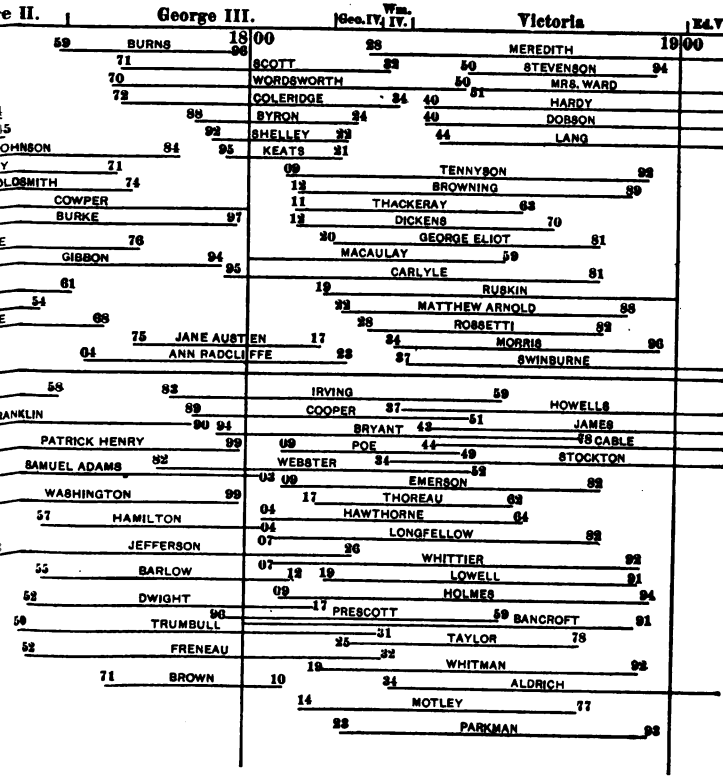


AND AMERICAN AUTHORS



AMERICAN LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

AMERICAN literature is that part of English literature that has been produced in America. Unlike other national literatures, such as the French or the German, American literature had no youth, no growth from remote poetic origins in native tradition and mythology. It is a fresh graft upon an old stock, and the parent tree has become the more vigorous and fruitful for the grafting. In tracing our literary lineage, we are led at once back to "our old home." All English literature is our heritage; Longfellow and Tennyson are brothers of the same poetic parentage. Chaucer is the "father" of American, as well as of English poetry, and it is a foolish pride and a shallow patriotism that would seek to separate our literature from its parent stock, for the purpose of giving to it the appearance of an isolated nationality. We should be proud, rather, of the unbroken kinship of English and American

English and American Literature

authors, and of the splendid progression of the literature of our native tongue, through a period of five hundred years, from Geoffrey Chaucer to James Russell Lowell.

"Literature," wrote Lowell many years ago, "tends more and more to become a vast commonwealth with no dividing lines of nationality." This condition is now realized in the close interrelations of English and American literature. Time and space are no longer barriers to the free play of common tastes, inspirations, and ideals. The "Yankee dialect" is no less familiar in literary London than is the Yorkshire dialect. Indeed, already our literature is an important part of English culture. It is probable that in England to-day Longfellow is the most widely read poet, and Emerson is a greater moral force than Carlyle. "Few Americans realize," says Clement K. Shorter, "the enormous influence which the literature of their own land has had upon this country."[1]

Early Conditions

At the beginning, when the wilderness was changing from savagery to civilization, and the active forces of men, both mental and physical, were limited to the struggle for existence, naturally few additions of permanent value were made to English literature on this side of the ocean. Leisure is required for the making or the enjoying of books; a community must possess tranquillity and comfort before it turns its attention seriously to art. Life

[1] "Victorian Literature," 1897, p. 2.

in those miniature republics scattered along the ocean front of the wilderness, was turbulent and precarious, a life of unremitting hardship and incessant warfare with the untamed forces of nature. There was little time for cultivating literature, and such books as could be used in the new home were brought from the old home in England.

But there was much writing, of its kind, in spite of these unfavorable conditions. The natural desire to communicate with friends left behind in the Old World led many to write detailed accounts of personal experience. The new and strange objects of the natural world, the vast and unexplored forests, unfamiliar flowers and fruits, wild animals, and mysterious red men, all were subjects for interesting descriptions. Then, too, in each band of settlers there were wise and far-seeing leaders who, conscious of the high destiny of their foundation work, made for posterity careful records of their doings. In New England the absorption of the common mind in religion and its strong polemical character led to an astonishing amount of theological writing. And, finally, there were feeble, pathetic attempts to relieve the barrenness of pioneer life and the rigors of an austere religion by indulgences in verse-making. But these relics of early American intellectual activity are valuable mainly as the material of literature. It requires a great deal of history to make a little poetry. Art flourishes best in a soil

Literary Beginnings

made rich by the decay of many generations of human activity. In the fresh contact of the colonists with the wilderness and its wonders there was abundant stimulus for the imagination, but they were uninfluenced by such imaginative possibilities. There was no perspective, no softening atmospheric distance in the pictures presented to their vision; everything was in the foreground, a glaring, hard reality. Two centuries passed before the romance and poetry of this life found expression through Hawthorne, Whittier, and Longfellow.

Poetry, however, is not all of art. Literature is an expression of life; and the best literature, that is, artistic literature, is an expression of the best life.

The Function of Literature

Genius is representative: it condenses and crystallizes into forms of permanent beauty the life of its environment. Every faithful transcript of human thought and experience, however crude and inartistic, is valuable in the interpretation of all related life. For this reason the literary strivings of our colonial forefathers have for us a priceless value, in the light that they throw upon the expression of our subsequent life. It would be impossible, for example, to penetrate the mystery of Hawthorne's genius, or breathe freely in the tenuous atmosphere of Emerson's transcendentalism, without a direct knowledge of the spiritual rigidity and gloom of Puritanism in the days of John Endicott.

A colonial literature is conservative and imitative,

not progressive and original. It is content to reproduce the established types and to reflect the accepted masterpieces. Its genius, such as it may have, is in a state of dependency. Such was the general character of literary work in America for two centuries. All writers of the seventeenth century copied the models of the Elizabethan Age, and usually made poor copies; in the eighteenth century the influence of Pope continued to dominate American letters long after its force had been broken in England. But with the beginning of national life this conservatism and timidity began to wear away, and freedom and originality gradually to appear. Literary independence, however, was not achieved until long after the establishment of political independence. The first clear note of intellectual freedom was sounded by Emerson in 1837. But with the general progress of national life there has been a continuous development of a distinctive Americanism in our literature, corresponding to the development of personal and social traits that now constitute our distinctive national characte ; and yet these qualities, it must be remembered, are incidental rather than fundamental. The grape is a grape everywhere, but in each region where the vine flourishes it produces a wine possessing some distinguishing flavor or color, due to some difference of soil, climate, or cultivation. So English literature in America, while retaining its fundamental English character, presents certain new

Colonialism

traits and qualities that could have appeared only in America.

American literature is divided naturally into three general periods. First, the Colonial Period, from 1607 to 1765, the year of the Stamp Act. Second, the Period of the Revolution, from 1765 to 1789, the year of the establishment of the national government. Third, the National Period, which may be subdivided into First Part, extending from 1789, the beginning of the government, to 1861, the beginning of the Civil War, and Second Part, from the Civil War to the present time. Within these periods, authors will be found to arrange themselves readily into groups, according to some common tendency or general movement of thought. Moreover, certain general characteristics will be found to distinguish each period. In the first part of the National Period there were two great intellectual forces, the Transcendental Movement and the Antislavery Movement, both centered in New England. Through the influence of the latter and its culmination in the Civil War, a more complete nationalism was reached. Hence in the second part of this period we find literature becoming less local and provincial and increasingly national in its characteristics and interests.

Periods

Since the beginnings of American literature were but the distant echoes of the nobler voices of England, it is necessary to keep in mind as thoroughly as possible the contemporary activities in English literature.

Our literature was born at an auspicious moment; the grand outburst of Elizabethan literature had just reached the climax of its splendor. While Captain John Smith was writing the first American book by the campfires of Jamestown, Shakspere was probably writing "Coriolanus" and "King Lear." Bacon had just published the "Advancement of Learning," in 1605, and in 1611 appeared the Authorized Version of the Bible. Each year London was listening to new dramas from the brilliant Shaksperian brotherhood of playwrights, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Chapman, Webster, Marston, and the others. In 1620, the year of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Bacon's "Novum Organum" was given to the world, and three years later appeared the first collected edition of Shakspere's works, the "First Folio," a book that marks the most glorious epoch in the history of the human mind. These products of English genius must be used as the basis of all interpretation of the early literary experiments in colonial America.

Literature in England

CAVALIERS AND ROUNDHEADS IN AMERICA

The most romantic part of American history is the colonial period in the Old Dominion. The name of Virginia itself associates the beginnings of our nation with the most illustrious age of English history, literature, and chivalry, and it is

The Virginians

pleasant to connect with the first efforts of American colonization the name of that courtliest of Queen Elizabeth's knights, Sir Walter Raleigh. An impenetrable mystery still rests upon the ill-fated attempt of Raleigh to plant a colony at Roanoke in 1585; but his wise policy of extending the English dominions in the New World by establishing permanent agricultural colonies, rather than by military plundering expeditions in the Spanish manner, was followed by other distinguished Englishmen, who were moved by the spirit of the age to engage in hazardous enterprises in these strange and alluring regions of the West.

In 1607 the first successful English colony was planted at Jamestown, and for many years the eyes of all England were fixed anxiously upon that perilous spot in the illimitable wilderness. Although the London Company had sent out this band of adventurers mainly for commercial and private gain, yet the thrilling enterprise of hewing out a new empire in the Virginia forests awakened national interest. The new king bestowed upon the undertaking his royal attention, and the good old Elizabethan poet, Michael Drayton, hailed the departure of these "beginners of a nation" with an inspiring ode, full of high hope and prophetic promise. Cheerily he bade them adieu: —

> Britons, you stay too long;
> Quickly aboard bestow you;
> And with a merry gale

Swell your stretch'd sail;
With vows as strong
As the winds that blow you.

Virginia and Massachusetts, says Lowell, were the "two great distributing centers of the English race in America." From Jamestown and Plymouth flowed two mighty streams of influence, dissimilar and for one hundred years entirely separate, but uniting in the period of the Revolution to form the swift and deep current of a new national life. Two types of men with distinct ideals of life were represented by the founders of these two colonies; in England these types came to be distinguished as "Cavaliers" and "Roundheads," and in America the qualities for which these terms stand may still to some extent be traced in the distinction between "North" and "South." The leading families of Virginia were from the higher ranks of English society, and were strongly bound to royalty and the established church; nearly half of the first settlers at Jamestown were called "gentlemen," men born to wealth and cultivated leisure. They came to the New World, not like the Puritans in pursuit of spiritual ideals, but from love of adventure, or in the hope of great fortune. They did not, like the Puritans, from the very beginning seek permanent homes on this side of the ocean and begin at once the foundation of new social institutions. Of the Plymouth Pilgrims not one returned, while of the Jamestown

Virginia and Massachusetts

colonists not one remained who could find means to get back to England. They were lured to Virginia by visions of an El Dorado such as the Spaniards had found in Mexico and Peru; but it was only after many years of suffering and disappointment that the golden treasure was discovered in the tobacco plantations.

The cultivation of only one or two staple products, as tobacco and cotton, the use of slave labor, and the inheritance of a feudal ideal of life, were the determining factors in the social and intellectual development of the southern colonies. Upon their broad plantations the wealthy planters lived in a kind of baronial isolation, surrounded by large families and troops of slaves, and exchanging at infrequent intervals, with a stately and gracious hospitality, the courtesies of social life. In the northern colonies the rule of settlement was centralization, the gathering of the settlers in town and village communities, with common and unifying interests; in the South the rule of settlement was dispersion, the dotting of the country here and there with manorial residences, with no common meeting-place except the courthouse. Education and religion were almost as thoroughly neglected in Virginia as they were thoroughly cultivated in Massachusetts. Culture was confined to the few leading families whose intellectual tastes were fashioned by English books and instructors. Such conditions were unfavorable for

Plantation Life

the growth of a native literature, and hence we find that until after the Civil War there was only an incipient and comparatively fruitless literary activity in the South.

But there was the best of English blood in the veins of some of those first Virginians; they were from a race of men born to rule, and their mode of life tended to develop an aptitude for politics and political leadership. The southern colonies did not rear poets and philosophers, but they did rear statesmen, and it is the first distinction of Virginia to be called the "Mother of Presidents."

Of the original Jamestown settlers, the one of chief interest to history and literature is the redoubtable Captain John Smith, a typical adventurer of seventeenth-century romance. According to his own story, he had already been engaged in many marvelous exploits in Flanders, Barbary, Turkey, and Tartary, and an experience with the mysterious "salvages" of the Virginia forests was quite to his relish. A vainglorious and boastful story-teller he undoubtedly was, but to his brave and sagacious leadership the colony owed its survival, and to his diligence with the pen we owe the intensely interesting beginnings of American history and literature. Even though the incidents in his early narratives were highly embellished in his later versions, and even though some of his best stories, such as the Pocahontas scene, have nearly evaporated into myth,

Captain John Smith, 1579-1631

yet there is so substantial a basis of fact underlying all his descriptions that we can afford to take his word upon liberal faith when he says: "I thank God I never undertook anything yet [wherein] any could tax me of carelessness or dishonesty." Indeed, upon the authority of Fiske, we may accept the Pocahontas story, without qualification, the current skepticism regarding that incident being based, as he shows, upon imperfect understanding of Indian customs.[1]

During the first year at Jamestown, Captain Smith wrote the first book ever written in America, "A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as have happened in Virginia." The book was published in London the following year, 1608, and sold "at the Greyhound in Paul's Church-yard," only a few steps from the house in which Milton was born the

The First Book

[1] "Old Virginia and Her Neighbors," Vol. I, pp. 102–111.

same year. It is a picturesque account of the stirring events in which the author was the central figure, written in a rough, vigorous style, quite worthy of a brave Indian fighter; hardly to be called literature, rather the material for literature; but there is a heroic vim, an Elizabethan breeziness about it, and a freshness arising from first experience with wild nature and wild men, that make its rugged pages good reading. The following passage describing the author's capture by the Indians will illustrate his sword-hewn style: —

My hinde [Indian] treated betwixt them and me of conditions of peace; he discouered me to be the Captaine: my request was to retire to the boate: they demaunded my armes, the rest they saide were slaine, onely me they would reserue:

The Indian importuned me not to shoot. In retiring being in the midst of a low quagmire, and minding them more then my steps, I stept fast into the quagmire, and also the Indian in drawing me forth:

Thus surprised, I resolued to trie their mercies: my armes I caste from me, till which none durst approch me.

Being ceazed on me, they drew me out and led me to the King. I presented him with a compasse diall, describing by my best meanes the vse therof: whereat he so amazedly admired, as he suffered me to proceed in a discourse of the roundnes of the earth, the course of the sunne, moone, starres and plannets.

With kinde speeches and bread he requited me, conducting me where the Canow lay and *Iohn Robbinson* slaine, with 20 or 30. arrowes in him. *Emry* I saw not.

Smith wrote eight other books, all of which show his enthusiastic devotion to the cause of American colonization; the most important are "New England's

Trials" and the "General History of Virginia." He explored the New England coast, and after an unsuccessful attempt, in 1615, to plant a colony there, laid aside his sword and compass. During the remainder of his life he contented himself with his adventurous pen, enjoying the celebrity of a veteran explorer; but not with perfect comfort, it would seem, for there were those who taxed him through envy, he says, with having "writ too much and done too little."

Other Virginian Writers

Among the early Virginians were other writers whose works are worthy of attention for their great historic value, and in some cases, for their genuine literary interest. William Strachey's vigorous description of the storm and shipwreck encountered by Sir Thomas Gates in the Bermudas in 1610 is believed to have furnished Shakspere with his "still-vexed Bermoothes," and the opening scene of the "Tempest." Alexander Whitaker, "the Apostle of Virginia," wrote "Good News from Virginia," described by the poet Crashawe as a "pithy and godly exhortation, interlaced with narratives of many particulars touching the country, climate, and commodities." George Sandys, the friend of Drayton and other Elizabethans, completed at Jamestown his excellent translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," a book that should have for us "a sort of sacredness," says Tyler, "as the morning star at once of poetry and of scholarship in the new world." John Hammond wrote enthusiastically of "Leah and Rachel," that is, "the two fruitful sisters, Virginia and Maryland." The "Burwell Papers" contain an important contemporary account of Bacon's Rebellion. The strongest intellectual influence in the South before the Revolution was James Blair, founder of William and Mary College, and author of "The Present State of Virginia." The first native-born historian of Virginia was Robert Beverley,

whose vigorously written "History of Virginia" was first published in 1705. The "History of the Dividing Line," by William Byrd, written in a bright and humorous style, gives a lively picture of colonial life. A more critical, but less interesting work is William Stith's "History of Virginia," published in 1747. If one would know the real life of the Old Dominion, one should read liberal extracts from these quaint and clumsy old chroniclers.

"I shall make them conform themselves," said James I in reference to the Puritans, "or I will harry them out of the land, or else do worse." This royal threat explains the initial force in the colonization of New England. Massachusetts Bay was a harbor of refuge for those English people who, filled with the spirit of Protestant revolt, spread abroad in Europe by the Reformation, demanded the right of free worship. Under the long ordeal of Stuart persecution, these schismatics, nonconformists, "Roundheads," worked out a new national ideal, the foundation ideal of American liberty. The Puritans

The *Mayflower* Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620, and the Puritans who followed rapidly, planting their little settlements along the Massachusetts coast northward, were people of remarkable qualities, and their influence upon the development of our national life has been proportionally important. The heroic, high-minded, undismayed determination with which these people pursued their ideal of civil and religious liberty to its realization is one of the grandest exhibitions of human virtue in all history. Their

tremendous earnestness, though to the modern mind sometimes comic as well as tragic in its expression, will never lose its impressiveness. They came to the New World not like the Virginians, to seek wealth and adventure, but to found new homes and new institutions, to set up new altars of justice and religion. They were nation builders from the start. Around the "meeting-house" they gathered in closely united communities, governed by rulers of their own choice, recognizing no "established" church or sovereign by divine right, responsible only to God and their own consciences. Life, by their stern creed, being mainly a preparation for death, religion became an all-absorbing passion, and sacrifice and suffering were accepted as divinely appointed instruments for purifying the soul.

Puritan Qualities

Their religion, born in an atmosphere of protest, and nurtured by controversy, was more intellectual than spiritual; although illustrations of the religion of true holiness and of sanctified love were not wanting among them, the mind rather than the heart was the instrument for the exercise of religious faith. Education was, therefore, of vital importance; public instruction was made compulsory, and only sixteen years after the landing of the Pilgrims, Harvard College was founded. "A hard student, a good scholar, and a great Christian," is the significant epitaph on an old tombstone in Salem. And the admonition of the Spartan mother,

Education and Puritanism

"Return with thy shield or upon it," is not more worthily memorable than the words of the Puritan mother to her son, "Child, if God make thee a good Christian and a good scholar, thou hast all that thy mother ever asked for thee." Many of these colonists were men of broad education, graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, who furnished a strong intellectual stimulus for each little community. "In all history," says Fiske, "there has been no other instance of colonization so exclusively effected by picked and chosen men. The colonists knew this, and were proud of it, as well they might be. It was the simple truth that was spoken by William Stoughton when he said in his election sermon of 1688, 'God sifted a whole nation, that he might send choice grain into the wilderness.'"

Nevertheless, those sober-faced, serious-minded New Englanders were a people whom one to-day would not like to live among. Hardship, isolation, a fatalistic creed, and the constant dwelling upon religious themes and their application to the minutest details of daily life, made them severe, morbid, superstitious, and fanatical. The New England conscience became, for a time, as stern a despot as ever King Charles had been. Liberty was perverted into intolerance. They persecuted Baptists and Quakers, and hanged witches. They prohibited Christmas and Mayday festivals, made laws against long hair and large dress sleeves, put women in the stocks for scolding, and solemnly whipped children for being

Rigors of Puritanism

merry. In the course of two generations, the broad-mindedness and lofty idealism of the first settlers — of Bradford, Winthrop, and their associates — deteriorated into intellectual narrowness, religious bigotry, and spiritual gloom. Under the limitations of such a society this change was inevitable, but a compensation has been found in the final results of Puritanism. The indomitable vigor and the inflexible fidelity of this life made a contribution to our national character that is now a source of national pride. "Let us thank God for having given us such ancestors," said Hawthorne, "and let each successive generation thank Him not less fervently for being one step further from them in the march of ages."

The New England Chroniclers

The men who lived this austere life, being consciously engaged in laying the foundations of an ideal commonwealth that should be ruled by God's law rather than by man's law, would naturally desire to make permanent records of their deeds; also, men over whose every action God's presence was believed to rest like a flaming sword, would naturally make their records serious and scrupulously minute. Hence we find many elaborate journals and diaries, in which the great and the little things of daily life were recorded with pious care. The best of these records are chronicles rather than histories, which have furnished the abundant material for all subsequent histories of the period. Tedious they are as a whole, yet they possess for us

a vital interest, for in the pages of these original documents the life of early New England is seen as in a mirror.

The earliest and the best of these colonial chronicles is the "History of Plymouth Plantation," by William Bradford, the noble leader of the Plymouth Pilgrims. A singular fortune has attended this work. It was left in manuscript by the author at his death in 1657, was used by Nathaniel Morton when writing his "New England's Memorial," by Thomas Prince in compiling his "Chronological History of New England," and again by Thomas Hutchinson in the composition of his "History of Massachusetts Bay." In 1775, when the library of Thomas Prince, stowed away in the tower of Old South Church, was plundered by British soldiers, this precious manuscript disappeared, and for nearly a century was supposed to have been destroyed. In 1855 it was discovered in the library of the Bishop of London, and was then copied and published in America. Finally, in 1897, by decree of the Consistory Court of the Diocese of London, the priceless relic was returned to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.[1]

William Bradford, 1590-1657

The merit of this work entitles the author, in Tyler's opinion, "to the preëminence of being called the father of American history." The heroic governor

[1] For the full story of the Ms., see the official edition of "The Bradford History," 1900, containing also an account of the formal presentation to the governor of Massachusetts.

tells the story of the long and bitter struggle of the Plymouth plantation "from the very root and rise of the same," and holds to his purpose to write "in a plain style, with singular regard unto the simple truth in all things." The narrative extends to the year 1646. It is grave in tone, straightforward and vigorous in expression, with touches of an unconscious but genuine literary gift that pleasantly relieves the monotony of solemn incidents, and gives evidence throughout of the wise, patient, and magnanimous mind of the author. Like Plymouth Rock, this book lies at the gateway of American history, imperishable, and imperative in its demands upon the attention of every student of American life. The following passage will illustrate some of its qualities: —

The "Father of American History"

Being thus arrived at Cap-Cod y^e^ 11. of November, and necessitie calling them to looke out a place for habitation, (as well as the maisters & mariners importunitie,) they having brought a large shalop with them out of England, stowed in quarters in y^e^ ship, they now gott her out & sett their carpenters to worke to trime her up; but being much brused & shatered in y^e^ shipe w^th^ foule weather, they saw she would be longe in mending. Wherupon a few of them tendered them selves to goe by land and discovere those nearest places, whilst y^e^ shallop was in mending; and y^e^ rather because as they wente into y^t^ harbor ther seemed to be an opening some 2. or 3 leagues of, which y^e^ maister judged to be a river. It was conceived ther might be some danger in y^e^ attempte, yet seeing them resolute, they were permited to goe, being 16. of them well armed, under y^e^ conduct of Captain Standish, having shuch instructions given them as was thought meete. They sett forth y^e^ 15. of Nove^br^:

and when they had marched aboute y^e^ space of a mile by y^e^ sea side, they espied 5. or 6. persons with a dogg coming towards them, who were salvages; but they fled from them, & rañe up into y^e^ woods, and y^e^ English followed them. . . . but they soone lost both them & them selves, falling into shuch thickets as were ready to tear their cloaths & armore in peeces. . . . And proceeding furder they saw new-stuble wher corne had been set y^e^ same year, also they found wher latly a house had been, wher some planks and a great ketle was remaining, and heaps of sand newly padled with their hands, which they, digging up, found in them diverce faire Indean baskets filled with corne, and some in eares, faire and good, of diverce collours, which seemed to them a very goodly sight, (haveing never seen any shuch before) . . . so their time limeted them being expired, they returned to y^e^ ship, least they should be in fear of their saftie; and tooke with them parte of y^e^ corne, and buried up y^e^ rest, and so like y^e^ men from Eshcoll carried with them of y^e^ fruits of y^e^ land, & showed their breethren; of which, & their returne, they were marvelusly glad, and their harts incouraged.

Next in importance to Bradford's narrative is the "History of New England," by Governor John Winthrop, leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. This is a faithful, unadorned record of early Puritanism, picturing in hard outline its toil, sufferings, meannesses, and superstitions, as well as its pathos, dignity, and faith. It is in the form of a journal, written with care only for an honest statement of facts, and covers the period from 1630 to 1648. One passage is celebrated for both form and matter, the exposition of the doctrine of true liberty in his defense before the general

John Winthrop, 1588–1649

court, when charged with exceeding his official authority. In this fine plea one almost catches the lofty sound of Milton's voice.

Dull and unreadable itself, for the most part, this solemn diary has served as a treasure-house of rich material for poetry and romance. Here Hawthorne found the story of "Endicott and the Red Cross," and the "Maypole of Merry Mount," and the hint that led to the "Scarlet Letter." Here, too, is the substance of Longfellow's "New England Tragedies," and of Whittier's "Familists' Hymn," and "John Underhill." By the deft touch of genius the dusty pages of the old chronicle have been transformed into works of imperishable beauty.

More interesting to read than the journals of Bradford and Winthrop, because more genuinely human, is the private "Diary" of Judge Samuel Sewall. For more than half a century, from 1673 to 1729, this "Puritan Pepys," with picturesque vanity and perfect honesty, like his prototype, the delightful English gossip of the Restoration, made a daily transcript of the littleness and the greatness, the practical thrift, the homely humor, and the sanctimonious severity of his life and of the life of his community. Thus he writes:—

Samuel Sewall, 1652–1730

Went to Cambridge and visited Mr. Danforth, and discoursed with Him about the Witchcraft. . . . Set two Chestnuts at Mr. Bromfield's Orchard, and three at our own, hoping they may come up in the Spring. . . . Order comes out for a

Fast. I carry one to Mr. Willard. Mrs. Willard talks to me very sharply about Capt. Alden's not being at the Lord's Supper last Sabbath-day. . . . I drove a Treenail in the Governour's Briganteen; and invited his Excellency to drink a Glass of Brandy, which was pleas'd to doe with Capt. Greenough, Mr. Jackson Elliston, and his little Son. . . . Carried my daughter Hañah to Salem in company of Mr. Hathorne and Sam. Wakefield. . . . Went in with Mr. Cotton Mather to Mr. Bradstreets, and heard him pray. . . . At 6 aclock my ink freezes so that I can hardly write by a good fire in my wive's chamber. Yet was very comfortable at Meeting. *Laus Deo* . . . Joseph threw a knop of Brass and hit his Sister Betty on the forhead so as to make it bleed and swell; upon which, and for his playing at Prayer-time, and eating when Returne Thanks, I whipd him pretty smartly. When I first went in (call'd by his Grandmother) he sought to shadow and hide himself from me behind the head of the Cradle: which gave me the sorrowfull remembrance of Adam's carriage.

His extravagant piety, his several courtships, his delight in "assisting" at funerals, his horror of wigs, maypoles, Quakers, and the Prayer Book, are all set forth with the same frank minuteness of detail. The reader is often reminded that Sewall was one of the judges who condemned the witches to death; but of this he afterward repented, and made a public confession of the error of his judgment. It is pleasanter to remember that he was the author of the first anti-slavery tract written in America, "The Selling of Joseph," published in 1700. He holds a place in literature, however, only by means of the unique "Diary." The completeness with which this work pictures Puritan society in and around Boston at the

close of the first century of the life of the colonies, makes it "the most important work of original authority in the whole range of New England history."[1]

Other Historical Writings

Many other works of a historical character deserve to be mentioned for their interest and value as original material for portraying the life of New England during the colonial period. Among these are Nathaniel Morton's "New England's Memorial," compiled largely from the Bradford manuscript and from "certain diurnals of the honored Mr. Edward Winslow"; Edward Johnson's "Wonder-working Providence of Zion's Saviour in New England," which Tyler regards as "a most authentic and priceless memorial of American character and life in the heroic epoch"; the "Journal" of Bradford and Winslow, covering the first year at Plymouth, and the continuation by Winslow alone in his "Good News from New England"; the saintly Francis Higginson's "New England's Plantation," containing a "description of the commodities and discommodities of that country"; and William Wood's "New England's Prospect," published in 1634, which is, as the author asserts, "a true, lively, and experimental" description of the geography, climate, products, and native inhabitants of the New World. John Mason's "History of the Pequot War"; Daniel Gookin's "Historical Account," a manly defense of the Indians against the fanatical and bloody zeal of the colonists; William Hubbard's "Indian Wars," and Mary Rowlandson's thrilling narrative of her captivity, are early and readable books about the Indians. A unique place will always be held by Nathaniel Ward's "Simple Cobbler of Agawam," a prose satire, full of wit, wisdom, and bigotry, aimed at toleration, the frivolous fashions of men and women, and other signs of the times, accepted by the author as evidence that "Sathan is now in his passions."

[1] Henry Cabot Lodge, "A Puritan Pepys," Historical Studies p. 22.

An exceedingly interesting work is the "Journal" of Sarah Kemble Knight, containing an account of the writer's adventurous journey from Boston to New York in 1704, full of wit, humor, and graphic description. A long stride toward systematic historical writing was made by Thomas Prince in his "Chronological History of New England," published in 1736. But still more elaborate and valuable is the "History of Massachusetts Bay," by Thomas Hutchinson, the last of the British governors; this work extends from 1628 to 1774, and its merits are such as to entitle the author to be ranked, says Tyler, as "the ablest historical writer produced in America prior to the nineteenth century."

THE NEW ENGLAND PREACHERS

The intellectual power of colonial New England was centered in the clergy. Religion was the business of life; the Bible was the rule of action, both public and private; the state was a theocracy, and the preachers were mighty men and rulers in the land. Only church members were permitted to vote in town meeting. Absence from church service was punished with fines and the stocks, and it was the sheriff's duty during service to keep the young people from smiling and the old people from dropping to sleep. The power of the clergy, exercised over temporal as well as spiritual matters, was as august as the sanctified authority of priests and kings.

Power of the Clergy

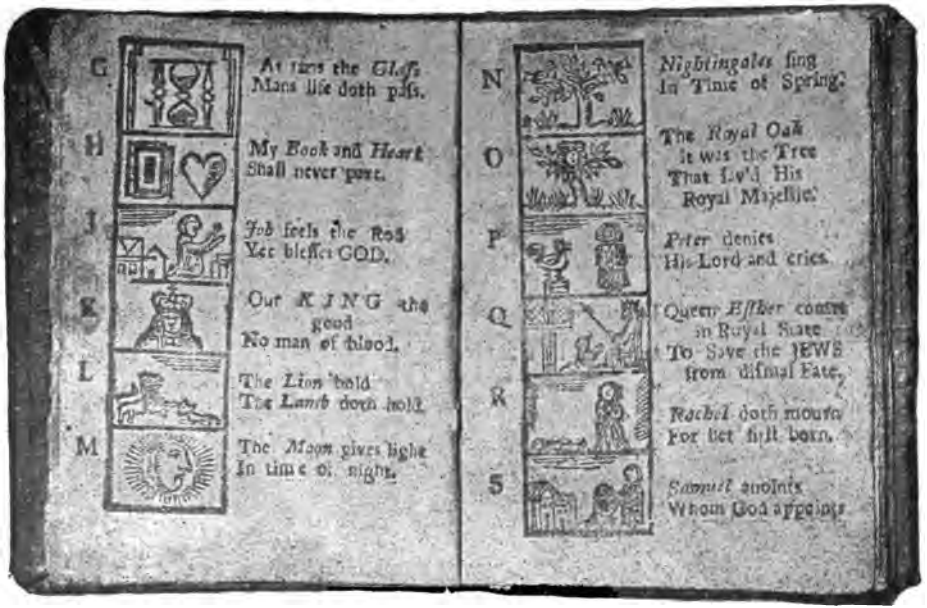
The work of these preachers was solemn, laborious, enormous; sermons were sometimes two and three hours long, and prayers often quite as long. "Mr.

Torry stood up and prayed near two hours," wrote a Harvard student, "but the time obliged him to close, to our regret." In the absence of newspapers and all forms of popular entertainment, the sermon was the absorbing topic of social interests. "Whether men should be encouraged in the use of means toward their conversion;" "Whether God is under any obligation to hear and answer the prayers of those who are unconverted;" with the discussion of such questions as these, the people sharpened their intellects and narrowed their souls. The sermons were ponderous and elaborate, laid out upon an exhaustive scale, and extending sometimes to the "twenty-eighthly," often highly rhetorical and largely devoted to the cardinal doctrines of Calvinism, total depravity, election, and eternal punishment. They display vast learning and strong reasoning, bearing witness to the marvelous intellectual energy of both preachers and hearers; but they are now interesting mainly as remarkable examples of a doctrinal earnestness that has passed away, perhaps forever.

The Work of the Clergy

Among the most eminent of the early ministers were Thomas Hooker, the founder of Hartford, Thomas Shepard, the "soul-melting preacher" of Cambridge, and that "famous man of God," John Cotton, minister of the first church of Boston. In learning Cotton was, according to his grandson, Cotton Mather, "a living system of the liberal arts, and a walking library"; but of some forty published works,

John Cotton



THE NEW ENGLAND PRIMER

From a photograph of an early edition, in the Lenox Library, New York

only one attained to long life, his catechism called "Spiritual Milk for Babes," included in the famous "New England Primer."

The Puritan church was a church militant, and the preachers were generally good fighters. The "old deluder Sathan" was forever reappearing in new forms of heresy and in new appeals for toleration, which must be swept away by panoplied arguments from Scripture. Skill in dialectics was quite as essential in the pulpit as holiness. It was the fame of Francis Higginson to be "mighty in the Scriptures, learned in the tongues, able to convince gainsayers." A large part of the ponderous publications of these sturdy theologians is composed of controversial pamphlets and treatises, and it is appalling to contemplate the amount of brain force expended upon these works that are now but the dry husks of principles once held to be as vitally essential to religion as to theology.

A Fighting Church

The great antagonist of Cotton was Roger Williams, who made himself obnoxious to the Massachusetts Puritans by pushing their principle of religious liberty to its logical conclusion. He insisted upon toleration of other creeds, as of the Baptists and Quakers, and upon freedom of conscience in both civil and religious matters, advocating what is now understood by the separation of Church and State. Banished from Massachusetts, he founded a colony in Rhode Island upon the basis of broad

Roger Williams, 1607–1683

toleration. Williams was a great-hearted and noble-minded reformer, the fearless champion of principles that waited until our own time for victory, but like most reformers he was fired with an indiscreet zeal that often verged upon fanaticism. He was a vigorous and voluminous writer, his main theme being "Christian libertie"; his chief work, "The Bloody Tenet of Persecution," was published in 1644, the year in which Milton's grand plea for liberty, the "Areopagitica," appeared.

Unlike most of the Puritan leaders, Roger Williams was kind to the Indians. "My soul's desire was to do the natives good," he says; and in this spirit he spent much time among them, preaching and studying their language; and to facilitate such missionary work, he wrote a "Key into the Language of America." But the one great "Apostle to the Indians" was John Eliot, whose translation of the Bible into the Algonquin language was the first Bible printed in America. He believed the Indians to be descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel; and to their education and Christianization he devoted a life of the most rigorous toil and sacrifice, acting as their friend and defender at times when the colonists were determined upon their extermination. "I have sometimes doubted," says Hawthorne, "whether there was more than a single man among our forefathers who realized that an Indian possessed a mind and a heart and an immortal soul. That single man was John Eliot."

John Eliot, 1604-1690

The most celebrated of the theological giants who ruled New England were the chief members of the Mather family, — a veritable tribe of Levi, — ten of whom became clergymen within three generations.

The Mather Dynasty

The founder of the "Mather Dynasty" was Richard, who came to New England in 1635. He was a graduate of Oxford, a distinguished classical scholar, a voracious reader and voluminous writer, and a famous preacher in Old England as well as in New England, with a voice "loud and big" that "procured unto his ministry an awful and very taking majesty." Four of the six sons of Richard became preachers, the greatest of whom was Increase, born at Dorchester, in 1639. He entered Harvard College at twelve, began to preach at nineteen, and after a course of study at Trinity College, Dublin, was settled over the North Church of Boston; where, "wielding the most tremendous weapon of influence known in such a community, he continued to fulminate, to the delight of his adherents, to the great terror of his foes, for almost sixty years." He was a stupendous worker, spending sixteen hours a day at his studies, and a powerful pulpit orator, with a voice like his father's, which he used "with such a tonitruous cogency," says his son Cotton, "that the hearers would be struck with an awe like what would be produced on the fall of thunderbolts." Of his nearly one hundred published works, only one retains a living interest, "An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious

Increase Mather, 1639-1723.

Providences." Many of the stories in this weird Puritan storybook — "remarkable sea deliverances," "remarkables about thunder and lightning," judgments upon Quakers, "demons and possessed persons," and "apparitions" — are well told, and illustrate the strange mixture of piety, superstition, and ignorance of natural laws habitual to the thought of the best minds of that period.

The most gigantic Mather of all was the eldest of the ten children of Increase, Cotton Mather, "the literary behemoth of New England." He was born in 1663, entered Harvard at eleven, was preaching at seventeen, and at twenty-two became associated with his father in the pastorate of the North Church, where he remained until removed by death in 1728. He was a prodigy of learning and laborious piety, possessing a marvelous memory and an enormous capacity and zeal for work. Indeed, the term "prodigiousness" best expresses the summary of his qualities. Like Bacon, he chose all knowledge for his province, and made vast conquests in his chosen field. His library was the largest in America. He knew seven languages, studied and wrote incessantly, and published over three hundred and eighty works. Body and spirit he disciplined with ascetic strictness; in a single year, besides his regular church work, he is said to have published fourteen books, kept twenty vigils and sixty fasts. When troubled about the publication of his "Church

Cotton Mather, 1663-1728

History," he "set apart a vigil," he says; "in the dead of the night, I first sang some agreeable psalms, and then casting myself prostrate into the dust, on my study floor, before the Lord, I confessed unto him the sins for which he might justly reject me and all my services." So devotedly attentive to God's will, and so restlessly energetic in the execution of that will on earth, as he interpreted it, he naturally was foremost among the prosecutors of the witchcraft victims; and his "Wonders of the Invisible World," containing an account of the Salem trials and executions, is an awful warning of the possible extent to which the human understanding may be perverted.

Cotton Mather

The greatest work of Mather, and the only one to be discussed as literature, is the "Magnalia Christi Americana; or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England," a work of vast proportions, in plan somewhat like the "Worthies" and "Church History" of Thomas Fuller. It is a wonderful book, "a bulky thing," as the author called it, of over one thousand folio pages; it contains the

The "Magnalia"

history of the settlement of New England, the lives of governors and famous divines, the history of Harvard College, "many illustrious wonderful providences," and finally "A Book of the Wars of the Lord." The book is a treasure-house of historical information, quaintly mingled with the errors, conceits, and pedantries of the author. From the pages of this "prose epic of New England Puritanism," as it has been called, Hawthorne drew his biography of Sir William Phipps, and Whittier the material for his "Garrison of Cape Anne." Its style is the ponderous, multitudinous, fantastic style of the last Elizabethans, Fuller, Burton, and Sir Thomas Browne; the pages are heavily decorated with quotations from the dead languages, strained antitheses, and absurd puns, all duly italicized lest the reader should miss the point; the thought often is quite lost in the confusion of a pedantic display of inapposite learning. Yet the "Magnalia" has merits, thinks Professor Wendell, that should place it "among the great works of English literature in the seventeenth century."[1] An illustrative passage will be worth more than description or criticism. The following is from the beginning of Chapter I of the second part of the History of Harvard College: —

[1] "Life of Cotton Mather," by Barrett Wendell, p. 161.

FIDES IN VITA; OR, THE LIFE OF MR. JOHN BROCK

Olim fides erat in vitâ, magis quàm in articulorum professione.
—ERASM. EPIST.

§ 1. DESIGNING to write the lives of some learned men, who have been the *issue* and the *honour* of Harvard-Colledge, let my reader be rather admonished than scandalized by it, if the first of these lives exhibit one whose *goodness* was above his *learning*, and whose chief *learning* was his *goodness*. If one had asked Mr. John Brock that question in Antoninus, τίς σοῦ ἡ τέχνη: "Of what art hast thou proceeded master?" he might have truly answered, Ἀγαθὸν εἶναι: "My art is to be good." He was a good grammarian, chiefly in this, that he "still spoke the truth from his heart." He was a good *logician*, chiefly in this, that he "presented himself unto God with a reasonable service." He was a good *arithmetician*, chiefly in this, that he "so numbered his days as to apply his heart unto wisdom." He was a good *astronomer*, chiefly in this, that his "conversation was in heaven." It was chiefly by being a *good Christian* that he proved himself a *good artist*. The eulogy which Gregory the Great bestow'd on Stephen the monk, *erat hujus lingua rustica, sed docta vita;* so much belong'd unto this good man, that so *learned a life* may well be judg'd worthy of being a *written* one.

§ 3. He was admitted into Harvard-Colledge A.D. 1643, where he studied for several years, with an exemplary diligence; being of the opinion, as Caleb said unto his men, "I bestow my daughter upon one of you, but he that will have her, must first win *Kiriath-Sepher; i.e.* a city of books"; thus, one is not worthy to have a church bestow'd upon him, until he hath sometime lain before *Kiriath-Sepher*, and staid at some university. After five years lying here (as loth to be one of the *sacerdotes momentandi*, or *modò idiotæ, mox clerici*, sometimes by the ancients complained of) he entered upon the work of the evangelical ministry; first at Rowly, and then at the Isle of Sholes. Here Scaliger might have indeed found "wisdom

inhabiting the rocks," and here a *spiritual fisherman* did more than a little good among the rude company of *literal* ones.'

The "Magnalia" was published in 1702, and it marks the close of a great period of English prose. Even Mather's friends recognized the antiquated character of his style, and his son condemned his "straining for far-fetched and dear-bought hints." The models upon which the "Magnalia" was wrought were already worn out in England. The stately, brocaded style of Milton and Browne, as well as the fantastic prose of Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," had disappeared. Out of the easy, crisp, and elegant prose of the Restoration comedy, Dryden, Steele, and Addison created a new medium of literary expression, the simple, direct style of the modern prose essay.

A New Era of English Prose

JONATHAN EDWARDS

1703–1758

In the year after the publication of the "Magnalia," Jonathan Edwards was born, the most profound thinker produced by New England theology. The contrast between Mather and Edwards is that between the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, between Milton and Locke. Through Edwards theology advanced to philosophy, and sermonizing to an appreciation and exemplification of literary style.

Edwards was a graduate of Yale College, a preacher

at Northampton for twenty-three years, a missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge seven years, and a few weeks before his death was made president of Princeton College. He was a marvel of youthful precocity, easily outstripping his teachers in the apprehension of new truths in science and philosophy. At twelve he wrote a conclusive argument against the notion of a material soul; at fourteen, when a sophomore in college, he read Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding" with greater delight, he says, "than the most greedy miser finds when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold from some newly discovered treasure." Before his eighteenth year he had anticipated Berkeley's theory of idealism in such memoranda of metaphysical speculation as these: "The material universe exists only in the mind," "All material existence is only idea." In physical science, also, he made many remarkably prophetic suggestions; for example, coming nearer than any one else to Franklin in his explanation of the phenomena of lightning.

Precocious Intellect

He was a man of gracious and tender spirit, susceptible to the poetic influences of nature, a lover of sweetness and beauty and ideal holiness. "He was a religious genius of the first order," says Whipple, "and one of the holiest souls that ever appeared on the planet." But he could not escape the influence of inherited beliefs, and while the natural tendency of his mind was toward a new

Personal Qualities

era of science, art, and poetry, he held his thinking rigidly to the doctrines of his fathers, and preached the orthodox terrors of Calvinism with a power in proportion to his splendid intellect and his deep, soul-absorbing sincerity. His hearers, it is said, would writhe in agony under the burning logic of his sermons. A passage from the famous Enfield sermon, entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," will show the vividness and directness of his method: —

God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth; yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, that, it may be, are at ease and quiet, than He is with many of those that are now in the flames of hell. So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that He does not let loose His hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such an one as themselves, though they imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them; their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared; the fire is made ready; the furnace is now hot; ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet and held over them, and the pit hath opened her mouth under them. The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him.

It is pleasant to compare with this soul-harrowing sermon his contemplations of the beauty of holiness, which represent the ideal and poetic side of his being: —

Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming,

serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness and ravishment to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; enjoying a sweet calm, and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrancy; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms, to drink in the light of the sun.

The work that brought Edwards a world-wide fame, "The Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will," is the most important bulwark ever raised in defense of Calvinistic theology. Its purpose was to reconcile the dogmas of Calvin with the principles of sound thought, its central proposition being that "the will is not self-determined," as otherwise there could not be an all-ruling God. This work still stands as a marvelous monument of profound and subtle reasoning, but with the advancement of religious thinking it has lost its force as a final explanation of the relations existing between the mind of God and the mind of man. Its chief interest to the present age is that of a historic problem in metaphysics. In other of his writings, however, such as the "Treatise on the Religious Affections," Edwards appeals to the finer spirit of every age with a pure, gentle, radiant, and exalted sense of the nobler truths of life. "His thought,"

"Freedom of the Will"

says Professor Smyth, "is pervaded by a spiritual insight which has an original and undying worth. It is not unlikely that the future will assign him a higher rank than the past." [1]

COLONIAL POETRY

From the time that Sir Philip Sidney was constrained to write his noble "Apologie for Poetrie," the Puritans had been hostile to poetry, identifying it with profligacy, and associating both with court and cavaliers. The drama was abhorred, music was condemned, and the impressive lessons of ecclesiastical architecture were rejected; every form of art associated with the church which they had renounced was regarded as a part of the devil's devices for entangling their souls in worldliness. Even the splendid protest of Milton's work did not rescue music and poetry from this overwhelming prejudice.

Art and Puritanism

The isolation and the rigorous occupations of the New England Puritans naturally tended to widen this breach between art and life. Not only were the influences of art absent from their lives, but there is almost no evidence of an appreciation of natural beauty. The nature with which they came in contact was, as Governor Bradford expressed it, "but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts

[1] Egbert C. Smyth, "Library of the World's Best Literature."

and wild men." The beauty and grandeur of a primeval world, and the romantic features of their own lives did not impress them; the poetic red men of Longfellow and Cooper had no existence for them. Religion, with which their minds were absorbed, was made forbidding by its unlovely externals, and life itself was made unhappy by the perverted methods of making it holy. This renouncement of all æsthetic influences left an impress upon the character of New England that is even yet visible, like the barren stretches of rock that scar its green-robed mountain sides in summer.

Song and fancy, however, cannot be wholly suppressed, even by the severest social conditions; the love of rhythm is natural and inevitable. In spite of the prevailing austerity there was a deal of verse-making among the sober colonists. Even the gravest of them, like Governor Bradford and Governor Dudley, occasionally revealed this human frailty. The great John Cotton stealthily wrote verses in his almanac, prudently using the Greek alphabet for better concealment. A sufficiently solemn occasion would excuse an open indulgence; hence we find their ponderous writings adorned with epitaphs and elegies, and many a lichen-grown gravestone still testifies to their struggles to express some freak of fancy in punning rhymes. The "Magnalia" is a storehouse of these products of the "mortuary muse." A poem by "J. S." upon the death

Puritan Verse-making

of "that supereminent minister," Jonathan Mitchell, begins thus: —

> Here lies the darling of his time,
> Mitchell expirèd in his prime;
> Who four years short of forty seven,
> Was found full ripe and plucked for heaven.

and ends with the writer's pious regret that he has not the power to "weep an everlasting shower."

This solemn trifling with the poet's art now only provokes laughter; but if it produced no poetry, it at least preserved the traditions of poetry. Unfortunately these reverend versifiers imitated the worst models in English literature, the quaint conceits of Donne, Quarles, Herbert, Vaughan, and others of the "fantastic" school of decadent Elizabethans, who mistook ingenuity for genius. Hardly a verse of all they wrote would now pass for poetry, but the heaven-born spark was kept alive until a more propitious period. A reaction in favor of art and the beautiful was inevitable, and it came with the unshackling of men's minds in the period of the Revolution. Moreover, Puritanism itself possessed elements of poetry — in its sublime faith, lofty spiritual ideals, and imaginative conceptions of the future state — that were to be splendidly developed in the early years of the nineteenth century, when the soul of New England began to expand with the first full joys of enfranchisement.

The first English book published in America, if we except an almanac, was the "Bay Psalm Book," printed at Cambridge in 1640 in the house of President Dunster. This literary curiosity, copies of which are rare and costly, is probably the most remarkable perversion of the poetic principle extant in the language. The "chief divines in the country," according to Mather, united in the effort to put the original Hebrew psalms into an English form that should be poetical, yet not too poetical to be used in the churches without scandal. A specimen of their work (from the fifty-first psalm) will illustrate the success of this attempt at compounding between art and conscience:—

"Bay Psalm Book"

Create in mee cleane heart *at* last
God: a right spirit in me new make.
Nor from thy presence quite me cast,
thy holy spright not from me take.
Mee thy salvations joy restore,
and stay me with thy spirit free.
I will transgressors teach thy lore,
and sinners shall be turned to thee.

For more than a century these contorted verses were sung in the churches by the method of "deaconing" or "lining," each line being read separately by the deacon and then repeated by the congregation; they were even used by the Dissenters in England and Scotland. The chief perpetrators of this pious atrocity were John Eliot, the Indian apostle, Thomas

Wilde, and Richard Mather, all university men, acquainted with real poetry, and themselves writers of good prose; it is not surprising therefore to hear them say apologetically in their preface: "If the verses are not alwayes so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect; let them consider that Gods altar needs not our pollishings: Ex. 20, for we have respected rather a plaine translation, then to smooth our verses with the sweetnes of any paraphrase, and soe have attended Conscience rather then Elegance, fidelity rather then poetry."

Our first professed, if not professional, poet was Mistress Anne Bradstreet, daughter of Governor Dudley and wife of Governor Bradstreet. She was born and educated in England, under influences favorable for the growth of a literary taste. At sixteen she was married, and two years later went to her new home in the Massachusetts wilderness. The "Bradstreet Farm" is still pointed out near Andover. Her "heart rose" at first, she says, against this change from an atmosphere of wealth and refinement to a harsh pioneer life among militant saints, Indians, and wolves; but she accepted her exile as God's will, and lightened the burdens of a long life with the consolations of literature. The determination with which she cultivated her slender poetic gifts, under conditions of continuous hardship and ill-health, with the care of her "eight birds hatcht in one nest," compels admiration and restrains criti-

Anne Bradstreet, 1613-1672

cism. Another form of discouragement she had to face, also, for she writes: —

> I am obnoxious to each carping tongue,
> Who says my hand a needle better fits.

Her poems were published in London in 1650, under a high-sounding title for which she was not responsible: "The Tenth Muse lately sprung up in America; or, General Poems, compiled with a great variety of wit and learning, full of delight," etc. The extravagance of the title-page was even surpassed by the praises with which her poems were hailed at home. Cotton Mather pronounced them to be "a monument to her memory beyond the stateliest marbles." President Rogers of Harvard found himself while reading her verses "sunk in a sea of bliss" and "weltering in delight." The Rev. John Norton declared in a "Dirge for the Tenth Muse" that were Virgil to hear

> her lively strain
> He would condemn his works to fire again.

"The Tenth Muse"

Notwithstanding the questionable propriety of her performance, as an evidence of the intellectual possibilities of the New World, the colonists were proud of their singer whose voice had sounded to far-away England. Besides, her muse was decorously serious, and offered her readers much useful knowledge. Her principal poems, "The Four Elements," "The Four Seasons," and "The Four Monarchies," a rhymed

condensation of Raleigh's "History of the World," are ponderous, mechanical, and dull. Generally the art is crude and the tone didactic and melancholy, but in the short poem, "Contemplations," there are touches of a genuine and delicate feeling for natural beauty that prove her right to the name of poet. Here is the beginning of American nature poetry in the love of this Puritan wife for the "pathless paths" among the "trees all richly clad" in the golden tints of the "autumnal tide."

Under the cooling shadow of a stately Elm,
Close sate I by a goodly Rivers side,
Where gliding streams the Rocks did overwhelm;
A lonely place with pleasures dignifi'd.
I once that lov'd the shady woods so well,
Now thought the rivers did the trees excel,
And if the sun would ever shine there would I dwell.

* * * * *

While musing thus with contemplation fed,
And thousand fancies buzzing in my brain,
The sweet tongu'd Philomel percht ore my head,
And chanted forth a most melodious strain,
Which rapt me so with wonder and delight,
I judg'd my hearing better then my sight,
And wisht me wings with her awhile to take my flight.

In such verses there is evidence of what Mistress Bradstreet might have been with a more favorable environment. Quite as strong evidence, perhaps, of her inherent poetic qualities is found in the fact that among her lineal descendants were Oliver Wendell Holmes, Richard H. Dana, Wendell Phillips, the

Channings, and other literary leaders of New England.

One other verse-maker of this period has a unique celebrity, Michael Wigglesworth, whose "Day of Doom; or, A poetical description of the great and last Judgment," was for more than a hundred years "the one supreme poem of Puritan New England." Wigglesworth was a clergyman, "a little, feeble shadow of a man," according to Mather, with a soul burning with religious zeal. He was a prolific rhymer, using generally a simple, sing-song ballad measure that readily caught the popular ear. His masterpiece, published in 1662, is a veritable "Epic of Hades," giving a realistic and vigorous presentation of the doctrines of Calvinism carried to their full logical results in the next world. The poem opens with a description of the heedless world given over to sensual delight; suddenly the last trump sounds, the graves are opened, and the living and the dead are summoned before Christ, the awful Judge.

Michael Wigglesworth, 1631–1705

"Day of Doom"

> His winged Hosts flie through all Coasts,
> together gethering
> Both good and bad, both quick and dead,
> and all to Judgment bring.

The wicked try in vain to hide "in Caves and Delves"; the "blind Heathen" plead ignorance of their "degenerate estate," having had only "Nature's Light" to guide them; and the children who died in

infancy plead the injustice of being punished for "Adam's guilt":—

Not we, but he ate of the Tree,
whose fruit was interdicted:
Yet on us all of his sad Fall,
the punishment's inflicted.

The terrible doom is pronounced, and all are driven away to the "Brimstone Flood":—

As chaff that's dry, and dust doth fly
before the Northern wind:
Right so are they chased away,
and can no Refuge find.
They hasten to the Pit of Woe,
guarded by Angels stout;
Who to fulfil Christ's holy will,
attend their wicked Rout.

Meanwhile the elect are transported rejoicing to the "blessed state of the Renate":—

The Saints behold with courage bold,
and thankful wonderment,
To see all those that were their foes
thus sent to punishment . . .
Thus with great joy and melody
to Heav'n they all ascend,
Him there to praise with sweetest layes
and Hymns that never end.

Before the Revolution this poem, which one now can hardly read without a shudder, was universally committed to memory as a precious embodiment of

the most vital truths pertaining to the human soul. Children were required to repeat it with the catechism. Its circulation, in proportion to population, was greater than that of the most popular novel of to-day. "It was the solace," says Lowell, "of every fireside, the flicker of the pine-knots by which it was conned perhaps adding a livelier relish to its premonitions of eternal combustion."

Contemporary English Literature

While Wigglesworth was writing the "Day of Doom," Milton was writing "Paradise Lost," two extremes that present a striking antithesis of Calvinism in its meanness and in its magnificence. Four years before Wigglesworth's death Pope's "Essay on Criticism" and Addison's "Spectator" appeared. While Anne Bradstreet was toiling with her "Four Monarchies," Herrick, Waller, Lovelace, and other Cavalier poets were writing their charming lyrics, and Isaac Walton was meditating his "Complete Angler." Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living" appeared the same year with the "Tenth Muse." But these influences did not touch New England. Nearly everything in English literature from the death of Shakspere, in 1616, to the death of Dryden, in 1700, was under the ban of Puritan prejudice. The strongest poetic influence was that of Sylvester's translation of the "Divine Weeks and Works" of the Huguenot Du Bartas, Anne Bradstreet's "great, dear, sweet Bartas." Slowly during the first half of the eighteenth century the influence of Dryden and Pope was working with liberal minds, especially outside New England. In 1747 William Livingston, of New Jersey, published "Philosophic Solitude," a poem in close imitation of the manner and spirit of Pope. In 1765 the poems of Thomas Godfrey appeared in Philadelphia, among them being "The Prince of Parthia," a tragedy in blank verse, which Tyler regards as a "noble beginning of dramatic literature in America."

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CHAPTER II

PERIOD OF THE REVOLUTION

THE opening years of the Revolutionary period were years of intellectual ferment and political reaction. Men were beginning to think for themselves and along new lines; they were breaking away from the old theological domination; politics and religion were being dissociated, theocracy was giving way to democracy. Material prosperity rendered men more ambitious for position and power in this world, and less solicitous about their place in the next world; everywhere, especially in the middle and southern colonies, men of wealth and education were increasing in number, and were living a life as liberal as that of the manorial halls of England. New ideals of society and government were stirring men's minds; the idea of nationality was spreading among the reading and thinking colonists; the "empires in their brains" began to take shape, vaguely but alluringly. Edmund Burke, in his great speech on "Conciliation," called the attention of the English people to the significant fact that the colonists were sharpening their faculties by legal study: "In no

Era of New Ideas

country, perhaps, in the world, is the law so general a study."

The Revolution was the result not so much of oppression as of a new conception of liberty. The Stamp Act would have caused no real distress, but it was odious mainly as an obstacle to the progress of ideas. A new notion of independence was formed, first for the individual, then for the colony, and then for the country. Loyalty to England suddenly changed to love for America. American patriotism was born, and nursed to an extraordinary growth. But this spring-flood of radicalism was not understood in the old country, neither were all of the colonists swept into its current. America was not only in conflict with England, but also with herself. It has been a common mistake to assume that the Tories were merely an obstinate minority, bound to the king by selfish interests. It is probable that they were nearly, if not quite, as numerous as the Patriots, and it is certain that their party contained "a very considerable portion of the most refined, thoughtful, and conscientious people in the colonies."[1] This fact naturally intensified the excitement and bitterness of the conflict. The Loyalists were not without patriotism, but they argued for a policy of conciliation and peace, and against the

Birth of Americanism

[1] Tyler's "Literary History of the American Revolution," Vol. I, p. 303. See also Lecky's "England in the Eighteenth Century,' Vol. III, p. 479.

dangerous and destructive policy of war and separation.

Thus for many years before a gun was fired, the Revolutionary struggle was a war of political debate, and out of the discipline of this conflict of hot words arose those splendidly equipped intellects that astonished all Europe with novel and profound theories for the reconstruction of human society and government. "Without boasting," says Daniel Webster, "we may say that in no age or country has the public cause been maintained with more force of argument, more power of illustration, or more of that persuasion which excited feeling and elevated principle can alone bestow, than the Revolutionary state papers exhibit."

The aroused intellectual forces of this exciting period found, as we should expect, abundant expression in literature. But this literature was limited in subject to the one absorbing theme, independence, and in variety to the simplest and most effective popular forms, the political essay, oratory, and patriotic poetry. In style it was imitative of familiar English models of the Augustan Age. Oratory was affected by the speeches of Burke, Fox, and Sheridan. Prose generally followed the formal, rhetorical, and "classical" style of Johnson, rather than the simpler, more flexible, and more graceful style of Addison. Poetry throughout the period remained helplessly under the yoke of Pope's rhymed couplet. Strictly speaking, America produced nothing

Literature copies English Models

distinctly American in literature until after the Revolution. Literary servitude to England was acknowledged by the very instruments with which the colonists were winning their political freedom.

The political essays were given to the public through the newspapers, or as separate tracts or pamphlets, which were sold upon the street. Pamphleteering was the journalism of the eighteenth century, both in England and in America. There were few newspapers — only forty-three in all the colonies at the end of the Revolution — and these were crude, inadequate sheets, edited by the printer who selected his matter mainly from the voluntary effusions of "Vindex," "Publius," "Novanglus," "Candidus," and other pseudonymous contributors. A vast amount of this controversial prose was published, much of it able and effective, but the occasion alone gave it vitality, and its present interest is chiefly historical.

Political Essays

The most natural expression of freedom is the eloquence of the forum. Democracy cannot exist without debate and speech-making. But the art of the orator, like that of the actor, is perishable, and his fame rests largely upon tradition. Probably no great speech was ever repeated with its original force, and only an occasional masterpiece seems to justify its traditional reputation when read calmly and critically in the study. The occasion and the man add qualities to the words that cannot be

Political Oratory

preserved by printing. Moreover, few great speeches, like the orations of Webster and Burke, possess in combination with wise and weighty thought the strong qualities of style necessary to preserve them permanently as literature. The Revolutionary period was preëminently an oratorical period, but we know little of its oratory except through tradition and by the effects that it produced. Yet the fragments of the great speeches that have survived are sufficient to explain the whirlwind of passionate patriotism by which men were swept into desperate rebellion.

Orators of the Revolution

The chief instigators to revolt were James Otis, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Joseph Warren, and Josiah Quincy, in Massachusetts, and Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry in Virginia. The argument of Otis, in 1760, against the odious "Writs of Assistance" is believed to have been one of the greatest speeches of modern times. Notes of the speech were made by John Adams, who wrote in his diary with fervid admiration: "Otis was a flame of fire. With a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eye into futurity, and a torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away everything before him. American independence was then and there born." It was the wealthy and aristocratic Hancock who said, when discussing means for dislodging the British

troops, "Burn Boston, and make John Hancock a beggar, if the public good requires it." And it was he who appended that first bold signature to the Declaration of Independence, written "large enough for George the Third to read without spectacles." It was the young and brilliant Quincy who said: "If to appear for my country is treason, and to arm for her defense is rebellion,—like my fathers, I will glory in the name of rebel and traitor, as they did in that of Puritan and enthusiast." It was Warren, the first eminent martyr to the noble enthusiasm, who exclaimed, "These fellows say we won't fight; by Heavens! I hope I shall die up to my knees in blood."

James Otis, 1725–1783
John Hancock, 1737–1793
Josiah Quincy, 1744–1775
Joseph Warren, 1741–1775

The "chief incendiary" was Samuel Adams, the father of the town meeting, the ideal representative and leader of American democracy. By his voluminous writings for the public press, by his innumerable state papers, remarkable for their clearness and force, by his persuasive oratory, and by his device of "Committees of Correspondence," he became the arch instigator and organizer of the Revolution. "A man who hungered and thirsted for the independence of his country," says Webster. "A man whom Plutarch, if he had only lived late enough, would have delighted to include in his gallery of worthies," says Fiske. He was powerful as a speaker, but more powerful as a writer and as a manager of

Samuel Adams, 1722–1803

men. "Every dip of his pen," said a political adversary, "stings like a horned snake." "Such a master of the methods by which a town meeting may be swayed," declares his biographer, "the world has never seen."

Of the southern patriots, Richard Henry Lee, the "American Cicero," left little by which we can measure his impressive oratory. With Patrick Henry, the firebrand of Virginia, we are more fortunate, for some of his speeches, written down from memory by those who heard them, were preserved by Wirt, his earliest biographer, probably with a fair degree of accuracy. The clear ring of his impetuous and audacious eloquence, familiar as it has become in hackneyed school selections, still stirs the heart of every young American. His opening speech in the first Continental Congress, in which occurred the flaming declaration, "I am not a Virginian, but an American," gave him the reputation of being "the foremost orator on the continent." Said Jefferson, "He appeared to me to speak as Homer wrote." The address before the Virginia Convention in 1775 is unquestionably more familiar to Americans than any other piece of prose in the language outside the Bible. It is natural eloquence. Throughout, the sharp, rushing, tumultuous sentences fall upon the ear like the clashing of steel and the hissing of hot bullets in the air, and the closing climax is a whirlwind of passionate and irresistible ap-

Patrick Henry, 1736–1799

peal: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

The most effective pamphleteer of the period was Thomas Paine, an erratic, impecunious Englishman, who came to Philadelphia in 1774, bearing a letter from Franklin, commending him as "an ingenious, worthy young man." He plunged, heart and soul, into the Patriot cause, and rendered inestimable service with his simple, direct, and forcible writing, clearing away with each stroke the obstacles to liberty. The powerful pamphlet, "Common Sense," appeared in 1776, and within three months one hundred and twenty thousand copies were sold; half a million copies, it is estimated, were circulated in this country and abroad. This was followed by the "Crisis," beginning with the electrical words, "These are the times that try men's souls," which did much to sustain the sinking hearts during the most critical part of the war. It was read to the army at Valley Forge by order of Washington. As a writer, Paine was clear and breezy, making an effective use of epigram and apt illustration. Attracted to France by the struggle for liberty there in progress, he wrote the "Rights of Man," in answer to Burke's "Reflections upon the French Revolution." The fame of his political writ-

Thomas Paine, 1737-1809

ings has been overshadowed by that of his crude, deistical argument against Christianity, "The Age of Reason," a worthless book, except as illustrating the tendencies of eighteenth-century thought, to which, however, an exaggerated importance was long attributed. The skeptical philosophy of Hume and Voltaire formed a natural alliance with the impetuous spirit of democracy in its first unrestrained pursuit of new ideals of liberty.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

1706–1790

The most widely representative character of the Revolutionary period is Benjamin Franklin, whose life work may be regarded as an epitome of Americanism throughout its progress from colonialism to nationality. Among the master builders of the nation, next to the "father of his country," stands Franklin. What Washington did in the field, Franklin did in council halls and at the courts of kings, and without the services of either it is probable that the struggle for independence could not have been carried to success. While alike in their patriotic purposes, these two grand Americans differed widely in their ideals of life. Washington stood for political and social principles that savored of the Old World aristocracy; Franklin stood for the new-born American democracy — the

Washington and Franklin

toiling, thrifty, freedom-loving, indigenous people — and to this people still the august figure of the one, in powdered wig and ruffles, is an object of reverence, while the homely, companionable figure of the other, with frizzled fur cap and spectacles, is an object of affection. The career of Franklin, moreover, was more varied and extended than that of Washington. He was the connecting link between two eras; his childhood was spent in New England under the stern influences of Cotton Mather's reign, and he lived to see the new republic established and to congratulate Washington upon assuming the office of President.

Benjamin Franklin

The story of Franklin's illustrious career as printer, journalist, author, inventor, philosopher, statesman, and diplomatist, is told in the inimitable "Autobiography," which every American reads who is not cheated of his just inheritance in youth. He was

born in Boston in 1706, the son of a soap-boiler and tallow-chandler. His education was obtained mainly from such books as came to him by chance. "From a child," he says, "I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books." And he would often sit up "the greatest part of the night" to read a borrowed book. Among his father's books of polemical divinity he found Plutarch's "Lives," which he "read abundantly," he says, and Cotton Mather's "Essays to do Good," which "perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life."

Story of Franklin's Life

There was then not a public library in the colonies. Of five hundred and fifty books published during the first twelve years of Franklin's life, all but eighty-four were on religious topics, and of the eighty-four, forty-nine were almanacs. A copy of Shakspere had not been seen in Boston. But Franklin fell upon "an odd volume" of Addison's "Spectator," and from a careful study of this he obtained a rhetorical training that helped to make him the best writer of the age in America.

Franklin was apprenticed to his brother as a printer, but, when seventeen years old, ran away to Philadelphia. He reached the city, dirty and hungry, with only a "Dutch dollar and about a shilling in copper" with which to begin business. With pockets "stuffed out with shirts and stockings," and with "three great

puffy rolls" of bread, "a roll under each arm, and eating the other," he walked up Market Street for the first time, and passed the house of his future wife, who, seeing him, "thought I made," he says, "as I certainly did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance." How he rose from "such unlikely beginnings" to be the first citizen of Philadelphia and the most conspicuous personage in all the colonies, must be learned directly from the "Autobiography," for any condensation of that charming narrative would seriously injure its delicious flavor for the reader. A brief enumeration of his achievements is enough to show the many-sidedness of his character and the broad field of his usefulness.

Practical Achievements

He established a printing business from which he made a fortune, and published the first American magazine, *The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle;* organized the city fire and street-cleaning departments, and invented the stove that still bears his name; founded the Public Library of Philadelphia, "the mother of all the North American subscription libraries," the University of Pennsylvania, and the American Philosophical Society; and when serving as postmaster general, he established the national post-office system. In 1754 he proposed the "Albany plan" for the union of the colonies, thus anticipating by thirty-three years the work of the Constitutional Convention. His contributions to science gave him a world-wide fame.

By the famous kite experiment he established the identity of lightning and electricity, and, with characteristic turn for the practical, devised the lightning rod. The reports of his investigations were published abroad, and the Royal Society of England voted him a medal, the king of France ordered his experiments repeated in the royal presence, and the German philosopher, Kant, hailed him as "the Prometheus of modern days."

Although, next to Washington, the chief actor in the Revolution, it is a singular fact that Franklin was absent from America during nearly the whole period. In 1757 he was sent to England in behalf of Pennsylvania, and again in 1764 to oppose the Stamp Act. For ten years he labored faithfully to avert the calamity of war, and returned just after the battle of Lexington, in time to attend the Continental Congress and sign the Declaration of Independence. Once more he was sent abroad — now seventy years old — to obtain aid from France, and he performed the task with a success that saved the American cause. In France he was received with extravagant delight. People gathered in the streets to see the American Solon pass; statesmen, philosophers, and men of fashion vied with each other in entertaining him; his face appeared in every print shop and on bracelets, finger rings, and snuffboxes; poets praised him with sonnets, and court ladies placed Franklin stoves in their chambers and Franklin portraits on their man-

Diplomatic Career

tels. For a medal struck in his honor the great Turgot composed the imperishable epigram: —

Eripuit coelo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.

The jealous John Adams wrote that his fame seemed "more universal than that of Leibnitz or Newton, Frederic or Voltaire." When he had conducted the peace negotiations with England to a happy end, Jefferson was sent to give him the long-desired relief from official duties. On being asked if he had replaced Dr. Franklin, the great Virginian replied, "I *succeed;* no one can ever *replace* him."

In 1785 Franklin returned to his "dear Philadelphia," and was compelled by his admiring countrymen to serve them still further as president of Pennsylvania, and as one of the framers of the new Constitution. With the signing of this document his public work was done. He was now very old, and the pains of age and disease were heavy upon him. "I seem," he said, "to have intruded myself into the company of posterity, when I ought to have been abed and asleep." But his natural cheerfulness never failed him. To a friend he wrote: "When I consider how many more terrible maladies the human body is liable to, I think myself well off that I have only three incurable ones: the gout, the stone, and old age; and, these notwithstanding, I enjoy many comfortable intervals, in which I forget all my ills, and amuse myself in reading or

Franklin in Old Age

writing, or in conversation with friends, joking, laughing, and telling merry stories, as when you first knew me, a young man about fifty." He died April 17, 1790, and twenty thousand people witnessed his burial.

Properly speaking, Franklin was not a literary man; he cultivated the art of expression, not for its own sake, but for its immediate usefulness in the common affairs of life. He wrote extensively, upon science, politics, economics, and morals, and with such directness of thought and clearness of expression that the practical end in view was generally reached. Even his most playful essays usually conceal, like a well-baited hook, some pointed bit of wisdom with which to catch the reader's mind. Of his varied productions those that belong distinctively to literature are the "Busybody" papers, humorously didactic essays written in his early years in the manner of Addison; the light and graceful "Bagatelles," written in old age, among which are some of his best known pieces of mingled wit and wisdom, such as "The Whistle" and "Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout"; the delightful Familiar Letters; and finally, the two works upon which his immortality as a writer rests, "Poor Richard's Almanac" and the "Autobiography."

Literary Works

The "Almanac" had long been popular in the colonies when Poor Richard appeared in 1733. It was the people's "general intelligencer," a familiar companion

in every household. It penetrated the remotest wilderness, carrying to the isolated pioneer scraps of poetry and philosophy from the great writers of all times, mixed with absurd weather predictions and other laughter-provoking whimseys. Perceiving the possibilities of this plebeian form of literature as a means of diffusing wise instruction, Franklin made himself through it a kind of universal schoolmaster. Like the great characters of fiction, Richard Saunders became a living personage among men, and his proverbial wisdom has become embedded in the moral nature of the American people. His teaching all tends to practical thrift, showing how to be "healthy, wealthy, and wise." "One to-day is worth two to-morrows," "A small leak will sink a great ship," "Plow deep while sluggards sleep," "An empty sack cannot stand upright," "God helps them that help themselves," "Handle your tools without mittens," "Three removes are as bad as a fire." Such are the homely saws of Poor Richard, some original and more of them borrowed, but all made pithy and pointed by Franklin's literary skill and keen insight into human nature. For nearly a quarter of a century ten thousand copies a year were sold. In the last issue the best of the proverbs were gathered into a connected discourse called "Father Abraham's Speech," which, says McMaster, "is the most famous piece of literature the colonies produced." This may be read in French, German, Spanish, Italian.

"Poor Richard's Almanac"

Poor Richard, 1733.

AN

Almanack

For the Year of Chriſt

1733,

Being the Firſt after LEAP YEAR:

And makes ſince the Creation	Years
By the Account of the Eaſtern *Greeks*	7241
By the Latin Church, when ⊙ enters ♈	6932
By the Computation of *W. W.*	5742
By the *Roman* Chronology	5682
By the *Jewiſh* Rabbies	5494

Wherein is contained

The Lunations, Eclipſes, Judgment of the Weather, Spring Tides, Planets Motions & mutual Aſpects, Sun and Moon's Riſing and Setting, Length of Days, Time of High Water, Fairs, Courts, and obſervable Days.

Fitted to the Latitude of Forty Degrees, and a Meridian of Five Hours Weſt from *London*, but may without ſenſible Error ſerve all the adjacent Places, even from *Newfoundland* to *South-Carolina*.

By *RICHARD SAUNDERS*, Philom.

PHILADELPHIA:
Printed and ſold by *B. FRANKLIN*, at the New Printing Office near the Market.

The Third Impreſſion.

FACSIMILE OF THE TITLE PAGE OF POOR RICHARD

Portuguese, Dutch, Russian, Gaelic and modern Greek. In France it has appeared in more than thirty editions as "La Science du Bonhomme Richard," and as many times in England as "The Way to Wealth."

This remarkable popularity was the result of humor, sturdy common sense, and an irresistible obviousness that characterizes all of Franklin's writing. There was nothing in Poor Richard's teaching to increase the spiritual and ideal elements of life, but much to make men prudent, industrious, and comfortable. Franklin's philosophy is utilitarian and material; lacking in his own nature some of the finer qualities of culture, he was inclined to exalt money-getting to a place among the higher virtues. But this is a limitation rather than a fault. He is, moreover, always the laughing philosopher. Like Lincoln, whom he resembles in many respects, he made wit and humor a part of his working strength. "Humor," says Parton, "was his forte, his element, his armor, his weapon, his solace. When most himself, he was most abounding in humor, and the older he grew, the more frolicsome his pen became." Natural humor he refined into literary art. In the varied and effective uses of satire he was the pupil, and perhaps the equal, of Swift and Addison.

Philosophy and Humor

The "Autobiography" is an American classic, and one of the few great books of its kind in the world. It has been translated into nearly every language of civilization, and is still read with hardly any abate-

ment of interest by people in all sorts and conditions of life. It was begun in 1771, resumed in 1788, and left incomplete. Through a strange fortune it was first published in French, and a correct edition did not exist in English until 1868, when the original manuscript was obtained in France by John Bigelow, and under his editorial care published in this country. Its "perennial charm," says Curtis, "is like that of Robinson Crusoe"; and this charm is due largely to a style that, for crystal clearness and effective simplicity, is the equal of that of De Foe. With plain, pure, idiomatic, Saxon directness, the language gives a perfect transcript of the author's mind. The reader never mistakes Franklin's meaning, and hardly notices that there is no rhetoric, no figures, no ornament except such as is native to the thought. Franklin followed, without knowing it, Chaucer's rule of writing, "the wordes mote be cosyn to the dede." The strongest impression of his style is that of the absence of all style. This is the result of character rather than of design. Franklin's prose is always a literal translation of himself, and in this fact lies the chief explanation of the abiding charm of the "Autobiography." It presents a broad, picturesque, fascinating personality; a self-revelation utterly without affectation and without reserve. "If I were required to say for which of Franklin's achievements he deserved most and best of mankind," wrote Horace Greeley, "I should award the palm to his

The "Autobiography"

'Autobiography,' — so frank, so sunny, so irradiated by a brave, blithe, hearty humanity."

Of Franklin's total work as a writer during the Revolution, Professor Tyler expresses this final judgment: "Undoubtedly his vast experience in affairs and the sobriety produced by mere official responsibility had the effect of clarifying and solidifying his thought, and of giving to the highest products of his genius a sanity and a sureness of movement which, had he been a man of letters only, they could hardly have had in so high a degree. It is only by a continuous reading of the entire body of Franklin's Revolutionary writings, from grave to gay, from lively to severe, that any one can know how brilliant was his wisdom, or how wise was his brilliance, or how humane and gentle and helpful were both. No one who, by such a reading, procures for himself such a pleasure and such a benefit, will be likely to miss the point of Sydney Smith's playful menace to his daughter, 'I will disinherit you if you do not admire everything written by Franklin.'"

Tyler's Estimate of Franklin

Class Study. — The Autobiography; Father Abraham's Speech; The Whistle; Franklin and the Gout.

Class Reading. — Selections from the Familiar Letters; The Ephemera; A Petition of the Left Hand.

Biography and Criticism. — Bigelow's "Life of Benjamin Franklin, written by Himself." Parton's "Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin." Morse's "Benjamin Franklin" (American Statesmen Series). McMaster's "Benjamin Franklin as a Man of Letters." Hale's "Franklin in France." Ford's "The

Many-sided Franklin." Robins's "Life of Benjamin Franklin." More's "Franklin" (Riverside Biographical Series). Sainte-Beuve's "English Portraits." Tyler's "Literary History of the American Revolution," Vol. II, chap. 38. Carpenter's "American Prose." Richardson's "American Literature," Vol. I, chap. 5. Barrett Wendell's "Literary History of America." Sparks's "Men who Made the Nation."

THE REVOLUTIONARY STATESMEN

The bold and impetuous patriots, Samuel Adams, James Otis, Patrick Henry, and their fellows, were political destroyers, rather than creators. They achieved liberty, but left to others the greater task of organizing and establishing it; they cleared the ground for the national structure, and the work was carried forward to completion by Jefferson, Hamilton, Washington, John Adams, Franklin, Madison, and Jay, the architects and builders of the nation, the first American statesmen. In 1783 the war was ended and freedom was gained, but not union. There were thirteen little republics, obstinate and jealous in the exercise of their new and blood-bought independence. European statesmen prophesied that they would destroy each other like the states of Greece, that freedom would resolve itself into anarchy. The results of Yorktown were yet to be secured. The period from 1783 to 1789, says Fiske, "was the most critical moment in all the history of the American people"; it was "preëminently

The Nation-builders

the turning point in the development of political society in the western hemisphere."

But there were men with splendidly endowed intellects to meet this crisis, and the successful manner in which they brought into being a new nation, founded upon new principles, still continues to excite the admiration of the world. For broad intelligence, noble sentiments, and lofty purposes, for all the highest qualities of true statesmanship, this group of men has not been equaled in our history. We have had great men, statesmen, orators, politicians, but these were grand men, the republic's noblemen. The written expression of the thought and feeling of such men, although intended only for political and temporary ends, would necessarily contribute something of permanent value to literary history. The crowning work of their united efforts is the Constitution, which Gladstone declared to be "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."

A Group of True Statesmen

Preëminent among these statesmen, for large scholarship and fine culture, was Thomas Jefferson. He was educated at the college of William and Mary, and proved his devotion to learning by founding the University of Virginia, where he established the first chair of English language. He was an indifferent speaker, but a fluent and effective writer; and his writings show that he possessed the literary sense, if not the literary inspiration. John Adams speaks of

his reputation as a writer "remarkable for the peculiar felicity of expression." His "Notes on Virginia" and "Autobiography" are of historical value and not without literary interest. His enormous influence as a political leader was exercised mainly through correspondence; not less than twenty-five thousand of his letters still exist, written with scrupulous care and taste, and often elaborated into formal essays, such as the "Dialogue between the Head and the Heart," a neatly executed bit of satire reflecting the fashionable sentimentalism of the period. His most illustrious literary achievement is the "Declaration of Independence." The sonorous style, as well as the political philosophy of this document, has lost something of its original charm with the lapse of time, but the statement of principles, beginning with the well-worn words: "We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," has continued to be the rallying cry of great political bodies whose ideals of self-government are still derived largely from the teachings of this Revolutionary statesman.

Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1826

In politics and philosophy Jefferson was an extreme radical, having imbibed the spirit of the brilliant theorists Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, and having become familiar with French revolutionary principles

during his residence in France as the diplomatic successor of Franklin. His political creed, presented in his first inaugural address, was "equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political," and "freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and freedom of person under protection of the *habeas corpus*, and trial by juries impartially selected." His faith in the people was sublime. The new government, "the world's best hope," instead of proving weak, as some feared, he believed to be "the strongest government on earth." Notwithstanding his excessive devotion to somewhat illusory doctrines of human rights, and in spite of the excesses into which his principles have sometimes betrayed the nation, we must still regard his writings as the best embodiment of ideal Americanism — freedom of the individual, belief in the people, confidence in majorities, and universal education as the final safeguards of liberty.

Jefferson's Political Principles

Jefferson's great political adversary was Alexander Hamilton, soldier, orator, statesman, genius of finance — in many respects the most brilliant and creative intellect of the Revolutionary era. When but seventeen years old, moved by a quick-born and irresistible patriotism, he addressed the multitudes in the streets of New York with precocious power, and from that moment was a leading figure in the movements of the period. To Hamilton, more than to any other one man, the nation

Alexander Hamilton, 1757–1804

probably owes the establishment of a constitutional government. In the struggle over the Constitution political parties had their origin. The Federalists, under the leadership of Hamilton, regarding extreme popular sovereignty with conservative distrust, advocated a strong central government as necessary to secure the stability of the nation. The Anti-Federalists, led by Jefferson, pushed for a more extended freedom for the individual and for the principle of "state rights." Like Washington, Hamilton extended his hand reluctantly to unlettered and unwashed democracy, perhaps "bewitched and perverted," as Jefferson charged, "by the British example." The main issue of this great dispute was not finally settled until the Civil War, and the Constitution was constructed out of compromises. To aid in securing its adoption by explaining and defending its provisions, Hamilton, James Madison, the "Father of the Constitution," and John Jay, soon to be the first Chief Justice, wrote the "Federalist," a series of eighty five essays, published in a New York newspaper, over the signature "Publius." The "Federalist"

The arguments in these papers, the greater number of which were by Hamilton, are clear, cogent, and effective. They constitute our finest and almost only political classic, and form, in the judgment of Fiske, "the most profound and suggestive treatise on government that has ever been written." The style of these papers, like that of all the political writing

of the period except Franklin's, is somewhat ponderous, with its Latinized diction and carefully balanced periods. It is Johnsonian prose, but is vitalized with a freshness of feeling and a sincerity of purpose quite foreign to real Johnsonese. The majesty of the themes under discussion would seem to have impressed itself upon the style of these earnest writers. The thought moves forward with a heavy rhythmic swing, like the resounding tread of marching armies.

George Washington, 1732–1799

The august personality of Washington left its impress upon literature in the "Farewell Address," given to the people upon his retiring from the presidency. As an expression of the character of the man, whom Gladstone called "the purest figure in history," this address possesses an inestimable value. It is known that he was assisted in the first draft by Hamilton, but its stately dignity of phrase, its large-hearted sincerity, its wisdom and nobility of thought, are unmistakably his own. Portions of his letters and journals, and notably the address of 1783 to "The Governors of all the States," have much more than a historic interest, when read as records of the ideal promptings of a singularly exalted soul.

The Diary and Correspondence of John Adams are delightfully readable and invaluable as contributions to the political and social history of the period. They contain minute records and vivid pictures of men and events, somewhat colored and always enlivened by the

writer's personal prejudices. His style is clear, crisp, frank, free from affectations, and full of character. The most finished orator among the Federalists was Fisher Ames, whose speech in favor of the treaty with England negotiated by John Jay, and eulogies of Washington and Hamilton, deserve to be included in the choicest literary remains of the period. He is learned, classical, elegant, and eloquent, but too ornate for present taste. "He has something of Burke's affluence of imagination," says Whipple, "something of Burke's power of condensing political wisdom into epigrammatic apothegms," but he lacks Burke's force of intellect and passion. "He was the despairing champion of a dying cause; he decorated the grave of Federalism with some of the choicest flowers of rhetoric; but the flowers are now withered, and the tomb itself hardly receives its due meed of honor."

John Adams, 1735-1826

Fisher Ames, 1758-1808

The writings of Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, Jay, are a recognized portion of our literature, because the hoarded wisdom slowly gathered in by their practical knowledge of life crops out in their most familiar correspondence. A truism announced by such men brightens into a truth, because it has evidently been tested and proved by their experience in conducting affairs. There is an elemental grandeur in Washington's character and career which renders impertinent all mere criticism on his style; for what he was and what he did are felt to outvalue a hundredfold what he wrote. John Adams had a large, strong, vehement mind, interested in all questions relating to government. He was a personage of indomitable

Whipple's Characterization of these Statesmen

individuality, large acquirements, quick insight, and resolute civic courage; but the storm and stress of public affairs gave to much of his thinking a character of intellectual irritation, rather than of sustained intellectual energy. His moral impatience was such that he seems to fret as he thinks. Jefferson, of all our early statesmen, was the most efficient master of the pen, and the most "advanced" political thinker. In one sense, as the author of the Declaration of Independence, he may be called the greatest, or at least the most generally known, of American authors. . . . As a political leader he was literally a man of letters; and his letters are masterpieces, if viewed as illustrations of the arts by which political leadership may be attained. . . . Hamilton was, next to Franklin, the most consummate statesman among the band of eminent men who had been active in the Revolution, and who afterward labored to convert a loose confederation of states into a national government. His mind was as plastic as it was vigorous and profound. . . . In intellect he was probably the most creative of our early statesmen, as in sentiment Jefferson was the most widely influential. It is difficult to say what this accomplished man might have done as a leader of the Federal opposition to the Democratic administrations of Jefferson and Madison, had he not, in the maturity of his years and in the full vigor of his faculties, been murdered by Aaron Burr. . . . Webster finely said that "the spotless ermine of the judicial robe, when it fell on the shoulders of John Jay, touched nothing not as spotless as itself." His integrity ran down into the very roots of his moral being, and honesty was in him a passion as well as a principle. . . . With all his mental ability, Madison had not much original force of nature. He leaned now to Hamilton, now to Jefferson, and at last fell permanently under the influence of the genius of the latter. He was lacking in that grand moral and intellectual impulse, underlying mere knowledge and logic, which distinguishes the man who reasons from the mere reasoner. His character was not on a level with his talents and acquirements.[1]

[1] Whipple's "American Literature," pp. 14–19.

REVOLUTIONARY POETRY

Poetry during the Revolutionary period remained in its dependent and imitative condition. The influence of the school of Pope was predominant; all serious attempts were reflections of accepted English masterpieces. The earliest note of originality is heard in the songs and ballads that appeared in profusion, as a kind of crude musical accompaniment to the Revolutionary oratory, harsh and monotonous, like the fife and drum music of the time, but an effective rallying call to patriots.

Lack of Originality

Balladry is the people's poetry, and to become classic a ballad must express a sentiment of universal appeal and must pass through the refining processes of the ages. Such are the old English ballads of love and adventure. Our early American ballads and popular lyrics, though filled with the strife and passion of the times, largely lost their significance with the passing of events that inspired them. They lack the romantic interest of the old Robin Hood and Border ballads of the "north countré"; there is none of the enchantment of distance, tradition, and mystery; and the sins of King George and his ministers no longer quicken the pulses with patriotic ardor.

Ballads

There are two mighty speakers,
Who rule in Parliament,
Who ever have been seeking
Some mischief to invent;

'Twas North, and Bute his father,
The horrid plan did lay
A mighty tax to gather
In North America.

In endless rhymes of this doggerel, singsong type, that were easily shouted to some popular air, the whole history of the conflict may be found recorded; but they are now claimed by oblivion rather than by literature. Many are clever, spirited, humorous, and pungent with satire, but without the saving grace of an artistic touch in the composition. Such are "The Battle of the Kegs," by Francis Hopkinson, "The Fate of John Burgoyne," "Bold Hawthorne," and "Brave Paulding and the Spy." The tender and melodious "Ballad of Nathan Hale" is too good to be forgotten. One of the most popular productions on the Tory side was "The Cow Chase," a parody on the old Chevy Chase, written by Major André to ridicule "mad" Anthony Wayne. One of the very worst of these rollicking ballads is the famous "Yankee's Return from Camp," sung to the tune of "Yankee Doodle," which appeared in 1775. Two lyrics of the period have been adopted as national songs, Joseph Hopkinson's "Hail Columbia," written in 1798, and Francis Scott Key's "Star-spangled Banner," written in 1814, during the British bombardment of Fort McHenry. Robert Treat Paine's "Adams and Liberty" and Timothy Dwight's "Columbia" have maintained a celebrity quite unwarranted by their merits.

The strongest form of versifying was the political satire. Dryden and Pope taught the eighteenth century the use of satire as a weapon in political warfare, and just at the outbreak of the Revolution Churchill's coruscations of satirical wit were astonishing the English speaking world. The American struggle produced abundant imitations of the English models, but few of them survived their temporary usefulness. Of all forms of poetry satire is most liable to an early death; nothing short of the wit of consummate genius can save it. The chief satirists on the Patriot side were John Trumbull, Francis Hopkinson and Philip Freneau, and on the Loyalist side, Joseph Stansbury and Jonathan Odell. Two of these, Trumbull and Freneau, came so near being poets as to deserve brief study.[1]

The Satirists

The most celebrated satire of the Revolution was Trumbull's "McFingal," a burlesque epic, modeled after Butler's "Hudibras." It first appeared in 1776, became at once marvelously popular, ran through more than thirty editions, "penetrated into every farmhouse, and sent the rustic volunteers laughing into the ranks of Washington." The hero is a pretentious Tory who, for his defiant harangues in the town meeting and obstinate defense of the king, is tarred and feathered by the patriot mob, and fastened ignominiously to the liberty

John Trumbull, 1750–1831

[1] For a full account of these satirists, see Tyler's "Literary History of the American Revolution."

pole. Although imitative in form and unfortunate in its Scotch title, the poem is genuinely American in spirit, and accurately representative of the political sentiments and customs of the days of '76. It is well spiced with wit and humor, and original enough to be worthily compared with its famous prototype. Many of its couplets are so neatly turned in the Hudibrastic manner as to be generally credited to Butler in current quotation. For example: —

> No man e'er felt the halter draw,
> With good opinion of the law;
> Or held in method orthodox,
> His love of justice in the stocks;
> Or failed to lose by sheriff's shears
> At once his loyalty and ears.

Trumbull belonged to a coterie of Connecticut writers known as the "Hartford Wits," who made Hartford for a time the literary capital of the colonies, as Boston was before, and New York after the Revolution. Among them were Joel Barlow and Timothy Dwight, afterward president of Yale College. Filled with patriotic zeal and confident of their summons from the Muses, these poets determined to establish an American literature that should be commensurate with the greatness of the rising republic. The result was much flapping and spreading of wings, but no flight toward the empyrean of true poetry. There was bigness, but not greatness. America — or Columbia, as

The "Hartford Wits"

the poets preferred — should have at once a grand national epic, like the "Iliad"; so Barlow wrote his "Columbiad," published first, in 1787, as the "Vision of Columbus," and in its final and enlarged form in 1807. Borrowing the plan from the elev- Joel Barlow, enth book of "Paradise Lost," the author 1755–1812 has Columbus led from prison by "Hesper" to a "hill of vision," who there unfolds before him the history and future greatness of America. This prodigious epic astonished readers for a time with its gorgeous panoply of words, its resounding patriotism being mistaken for poetry, but it now lies undisturbed beneath the dust of a century. Hawthorne playfully suggested that it be set to the music of artillery and thunder and lightning, as a kind of national oratorio.

Barlow was more successful with mock heroics than with real heroics. His "Hasty Pudding," written in Savoy in 1793, and dedicated to Mrs. Washington, is pleasantly humorous, and redolent of the cornfields and kitchens of New England. His intimate knowledge of the old-time farmer's life is shown in many homely pictures quite as realistic as the description of the "husking": —

> Where the huge heap lies center'd in the hall,
> The lamp suspended from the cheerful wall,
> Brown, corn-fed nymphs, and strong, hard-handed beaux,
> Alternate ranged, extend in circling rows,
> Assume their seats, the solid mass attack;
> The dry husks rustle, and the corncobs crack;
> The song, the laugh, alternate notes resound,

And the sweet cider trips in silence round.
The laws of husking every wight can tell,
And sure no laws he ever keeps so well:
For each red ear a general kiss he gains,
With each smut ear he smuts the luckless swains;
But when to some sweet maid the prize is cast,
Red as her lips and taper as her waist,
She walks the round and culls one favor'd beau,
Who leaps the luscious tribute to bestow.
Various the sport, as are the wits and brains
Of well-pleased lasses and contending swains;
Till the vast mound of corn is swept away,
And he that gets the last ear wins the day.

Another grandiloquent epic was Dwight's "Conquest of Canaan," published in 1785, "the first of the kind which has been published in this country," proudly wrote the author. It contains between nine and ten thousand verses, arranged in well-starched Augustan couplets, stiffly braced with artificial antitheses. With a patriotic stretch of epic consistency, the War of Independence is inserted among the wars of the Israelites. To read this epic, or any considerable portion of it, would require heroic patience. But not so with the author's moralized pastoral, "Greenfield Hill," in which there are encouraging hints of real poetic feeling. It pleasantly describes a Connecticut village, recalling distantly Denham's "Cooper's Hill," and reflecting the influence of Thompson, Goldsmith, and Beattie. But nothing that he wrote in verse is so valuable as his "Travels in New England and New

Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817

York," an entertaining description of personal observation and experience, which must increase in interest and historical value as time goes on. Dwight was the grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and proved his inheritance of theological power in his best-known work, "Theology Explained and Defended," which has passed through more than a hundred editions, as the authoritative and fundamental presentation of New England orthodoxy.

It is a high distinction to bear what Sidney called "the sacred name of poet." Among the Revolutionary rhymers, Philip Freneau alone established a full right to this name. In the opinion of Tyler, he was "a true man of genius, the one poet of unquestionable originality granted to America prior to the nineteenth century." He might have been a gentle and graceful singer of imperishable songs, but the times made him a fierce and bitter satirist. With astonishing facility he turned events and sentiments of the hour into ballads, satires, and lampoons, burning with patriot resentment and vituperative scorn, which perished with the hour they served. But a few scattered lyrics reveal the real poet, born out of due time. In contrast with the ponderous dullness of Dwight and Barlow, such lines as these from "The Wild Honeysuckle" are a refreshing surprise: —

Philip Freneau, 1752–1832

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,

Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet;
No roving foot shall crush thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
And planted here the guardian shade,
And sent soft waters murmuring by
Thus quietly thy summer goes,
Thy days declining to repose.

This delicate little poem is as distinct a departure from the established models of eighteenth-century poetry as Burns's "To a Field Mouse" and "To the Daisy," and it is a significant fact that Freneau's first volume of poems and Burns's first volume appeared in the same year, 1786. Pope and his devoted followers never discovered nature; there are no wild flowers and bird notes in their poetry. Freneau proved the genuineness of his gift by breaking away from conventions. His songs are fresh, original, and musical. He saw the difference between natural rhythm and mechanical rhythm, and he discovered the poetic beauty of simple objects in nature. This weak, but genuine, strain of nature music was prelusive of the full, rich tones of Bryant and Emerson. In the "Indian Burying Ground" and "Indian Student," Freneau gave the first suggestion of that pensive, romantic quality with which the life of the departing red men was invested by Longfellow. The first of these poems Campbell

Beginning of Nature Poetry

complimented by borrowing a line without acknowledgment for his "O'Connor's Child." The poem on the battle of "Eutaw Springs" was similarly honored by Scott, who pronounced it one of the finest things of its kind in the language, and inserted one of its best lines in "Marmion." The little poem, "To a Honey Bee," Stedman regards as "good enough to be Landor's," and "The House of Night," which anticipates the weirdness of Poe, Richardson thinks to be "the best poem written in America before 1800." Surely, with these lyrics before the world, American poetry had made a respectable beginning.

Prominent among the "Hartford Wits" was David Humphreys, who enjoyed the intimate friendship of Washington, and celebrated it in the once admired ode "Mount Vernon." Barlow, Trumbull, and Humphreys published, in 1786, a series of satirical papers called the "Anarchiad," in the manner of the "Rolliad," which appeared a year earlier in England. The purpose of these papers was to correct the evils of the political confusion that prevailed just before the adoption of the Constitution, and they contain much clever ridicule of the Democrats and their great chief, Jefferson; for the Connecticut writers were all Federalists. A similar series called the "Echo," was written by Dwight and Richard Alsop. Trumbull also published a series of essays called "The Meddler," in the style of Addison and Steele, whose influence controlled all light prose writ-

Political Satire

ing down to Irving's "Sketch Book." The leading Democratic wit was Hugh Henry Brackenridge, a Pennsylvania judge, and author of "Modern Chivalry." This excellent political satire reflects the influence of Cervantes, Fielding, and Sterne, but its strong-flavored frontier humor and homely wisdom are thoroughly American. He also won fame in his own time by two dramatic poems, "Battle of Bunker's Hill" and "Death of Montgomery."

The "Poems" of the negro girl, Phillis Wheatley, published in London in 1773, afford one of the most singular cases of precocity known to literature. They rank with the best of the American echoes of the English classicists, and there can be no doubt of their genuineness, since the early editions contain the testimony of estimable people of Boston, to the fact that they "were written by Phillis, a young negro girl, who was, but a few years since, brought an uncultured barbarian from Africa." Alexander Wilson, the "father of American ornithology," was our earliest poet naturalist. His poem, "The Foresters," shows the poet's sensitive appreciation, as well as the scientist's close observation of nature. One of the most pleasing imitations of Pope is Livingston's "Philosophic Solitude," in which the antitheses and imagery of the "Rape of the Lock," are deftly reproduced: —

Phillis Wheatley, 1754–1784

Alexander Wilson, 1766–1813

William Livingston, 1723–1790

Mine be the pleasure of a rural life,
From noise remote and ignorant of strife,
Far from the painted belle and white-gloved beau,
The lawless masquerade and midnight show;
From ladies, lapdogs, courtiers, garters, stars,
Fops, fiddlers, tyrants, emperors, and czars.

In 1818 the young Bryant wrote for the *North American Review* a critical survey of American poetry, in which he mentions only those poets whom he esteemed worthy to be remembered, passing over many names "because he would not willingly disturb their passage to that oblivion toward which, to the honor of our country, they are hastening." It is a melancholy evidence of the wreckage wrought by time with literary reputations that not one of those whom he does mention is now read or remembered. Of all this strenuous versifying in the eighteenth century only a few lyrics remain as a permanent part of literature. The chief value of all the rest is historical. Bryant condemned his brother bards for their "sickly and affected imitation of the peculiar manner of the late popular poets of England." But his censure was really too severe. In the tumult of war and the uncertainty of nation-building there could be no new creative impulses and no prevailing æsthetic purpose in literature; it must serve the purpose of the day, and that purpose was mainly political.

Bryant's Criticism

But a new dawn was breaking. When Bryant wrote his criticism, he had already published "Thanatopsis"

and "To a Waterfowl." A new influence had come from England, where the spell of Pope was broken before the close of the century. The year in which Dwight's "Conquest of Canaan" appeared, Cowper's "Task" was published. Crabbe's "Village" appeared two years before. While Barlow was writing his "Vision of Columbus" Burns was writing his immortal songs. In 1789, the year of the Constitution, appeared William Blake's "Songs of Innocence," and Gilbert White's "Natural History of Selborne," and in 1798 came Wordsworth and Coleridge's "Lyrical Ballads." This new force in poetry was felt in America as soon as the era of peace and settled government had fully opened.

Change in English Poetry

As the Revolutionary epoch drew to a close there was a general awakening to the need of æsthetic culture, and attention was given to other forms of art. Benjamin West won fame abroad as a painter. Copley, in Boston, and Peale, in Philadelphia, painted hundreds of portraits of the Revolutionary heroes, while the battle scenes were spread upon canvas by Colonel Trumbull; and the portraits of Gilbert Stuart ranked with the masterpieces of the English school.

Beginning of American Art

The drama was also making headway against the prejudice and poverty of the New World. In 1752, for the first time in this country, a play ("The Merchant of Venice") was given by professional actors, at Williamsburg, Va. A theater was built in New York in 1753, and another in 1759 in Philadelphia. The first American play to be acted by professionals was Royal Tyler's "Contrast," given in New York in 1786, a comedy, in which the character of the "stage Yankee" appeared, which has since become so familiar.

The Drama

Tyler's "Georgia Speculator" also had a popular run in Boston in 1797, and two years later appeared the same author's "Algerine Captive," one of the earliest attempts at fiction. William Dunlap, a painter, historian, and playwright of New York, did much to promote the interests of art and the drama. In 1818 John Howard Payne's "Brutus" appeared, one of the very few American plays that have continued upon the stage. In 1829 "Metamora," written by John A. Stone for Edwin Forrest, the first great American tragedian, set the fashion for Indian plays. At the close of the War of 1812, we find the artistic instincts of America aroused in many directions; the ground was prepared for the rich growth of the next period.

Class Reading. — Battle of the Kegs; Ballad of Nathan Hale; Hail Columbia; Adams and Liberty; The Liberty Song; The Yankee Man-of-War; The Star-spangled Banner; The Hasty Pudding; The Indian Burying Ground; The Indian Student; The Wild Honeysuckle; Eutaw Springs; To a Honey Bee.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

1771–1810

Imaginative literature made a better beginning in fiction than in poetry. The "sentimentalism" that was rising to flood tide in English literature appeared in 1790 in Mrs. Susanna Rowson's "Charlotte Temple," a novel bedewed with the tears of many thousands of readers. In contrast to this was Mrs. Tabitha Tenney's "Female Quixotism," 1808, which satirized "the lachrymose and gushing willingness of young women to believe in everything superficially romantic." James Fenimore Cooper began, in 1821, his remarkable series

First American Novels

of novels with "The Spy"; the same year John Neal, whose multitudinous forces, says Whipple, "occupy all the province of letters," produced his "Logan," followed by "Seventy-six" and other historical tales; and in 1824 Catharine Maria Sedgwick's "Redwood" achieved the celebrity of four European translations. But the real founder of American fiction was Charles Brockden Brown, our first professional man of letters, whose extraordinary books can still be read with more than merely a student's interest. He was born in Philadelphia in 1771, and divided his life of thirty-nine years between that city and New York. He was retiring and studious in his nature, morbid and introspective in thought, the victim of constant ill health and of the poverty enforced by his devotion to literature. In 1799 he established in New York the *Monthly Magazine and American Register*, which lived but one year; in 1803 the *Literary Magazine and American Register*, in Philadelphia, which survived five years; and in 1806 the *American Register*, which continued until his death,—names and dates indicative, not only of Brown's struggles, but also of the early struggles of periodical literature.

Between 1798 and 1801 Brown wrote and published six novels, the best of which are "Wieland," "Edgar Huntley," and "Arthur Mervyn." The last is celebrated for its realistic descriptions of the yellow fever scourge in Philadelphia in 1793, recalling the similar

work of De Foe. In "Edgar Huntley" he anticipated Cooper by introducing Indian characters and perilous adventures in the remote wilderness. These novels are generally condemned for their many palpable faults, without being credited with their real merits. They are fantastic mixtures of the extravagant sentimentality and absurd romance that ran riot in English fiction before Scott gave sanity and principles to romance writing. They belong to the "nightmare school," with Walpole's "Castle of Otranto," Mrs. Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho," William Godwin's "Caleb Williams," and Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein." They possess all the stage properties of melodramatic sensations, secret passages, forged letters, hidden treasure, horrors of blood and mystery, victims of ventriloquism, somnambulism, and madness. The plots are carelessly constructed, the diction is stilted, the heroines are too "nymph-like" and "celestial" to be human, and the heroes are morbid or monstrous. The atmosphere is one of midnight mystery, that induces the sensation of creepiness, and the prevailing tone is melancholy.

Brown's Novels: their Faults

Yet in spite of all this, as Richardson remarks, one is sure to find, even in the poorest of Brown's novels, "some touch of what we call genius." He knew the trick of holding the attention by piquing the curiosity, as well as some of the methods of modern "realism," in the use of minute details for presenting vivid scenes,

and in psychological probings after motives. In weird imaginativeness his novels are forerunners of Poe's "Tales," and foreshadowings of Hawthorne's subtile dealings with mystery. In his style and thought he betrays his indebtedness to Godwin and his wife, Mary Wollstonecraft. Under the influence of the latter, doubtless, he wrote "Alcuin," the earliest protest in this country in behalf of woman's higher privileges. The poet Shelley was powerfully influenced by these novels, and his own experiments in prose fiction, and those of Mrs. Shelley, were largely due to this influence.

Their Merits

"With all his inflation of style," says Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "he was undoubtedly, in his way, a careful observer. The proof of this is, that he has preserved for us many minor points of life and manners which make the Philadelphia of a century ago now more familiar to us than is any other American city of that period. He gives us the roving Indian; the newly arrived French musician with violin and monkey; the one-story farmhouses, where boarders are entertained at a dollar a week; the gray cougar amid caves of limestone. We learn from him 'the dangers and toils of a midnight journey in a stage coach in America. The roads are knee deep in mire, winding through crags and pits, while the wheels groan and totter, and the curtain and roof admit the wet at a thousand seams.' We learn the proper costume for a youth of good

Their Historical Value

fortune and family -- 'nankeen coat striped with green, a white silk waistcoat elegantly needle-wrought, cassimere pantaloons, stockings of variegated silk, and shoes that in their softness vie with satin.' When dressing himself, this favored youth ties his flowing locks with a black ribbon. We discover also, with some surprise, that negroes were freely admitted to ride in stage coaches in Pennsylvania, although they were liable, half a century later, to be ejected from street cars. We learn also that there were negro free schools in Philadelphia. All this was before 1801."

Reading and Discussion. — Arthur Mervyn.

Biography and Criticism. — Sparks's "American Biography," Vol. I. Encyclopædia Britannica. Prescott's "Miscellanies." Richardson's "American Literature," Vol. II, pp. 286–289. Carpenter's "American Prose." Tuckerman's "Essays, Biographical and Critical." Barrett Wendell's "Literary History of America."

The patriotism of the Revolutionary period is peculiarly illustrated in the work of Noah Webster. The discharged soldiers had hardly reached their homes when he began publishing school text-books for the new republic. In 1783 appeared the first part of "A Grammatical Institute of the English Language, comprising an Easy, Concise, and Systematic Method of Education, designed for the Use of English Schools in America." This comprehensive scheme was to be given to the world in three parts, a speller, a grammar, and a reader. This

Noah Webster, 1758–1843

famous "speller," of which it is estimated over sixty millions of copies have been issued, "may fairly be called the first book published in the United States of America." In 1828 appeared the "American Dictionary of the English Language," a work that marks an epoch in the history of English speech. "Let us seize the present moment," said Webster, "and establish a national language as well as a national government." Upon the basis of this lexicographical declaration of independence he constructed his great book, assuming as radical an attitude toward the sanctities of British speech as his fellow nation-builders had assumed toward the British Constitution.

One book belonging to this period possesses a truly unique interest, the "Journal" of John Woolman, "beyond comparison," declared Channing, "the sweetest and purest autobiography in the language." Charles Lamb wrote: "Get the writings of John Woolman by heart, and love the early Quakers." Similarly Coleridge was fascinated by the beauty and tenderness of this quaint narrative. Woolman was a Quaker, born in New Jersey in 1720, a tailor by trade, a great traveler, a friend of the Indians, and an opponent of slavery. Whittier says in the introduction to his edition of the "Journal": "I have been awed and solemnized by the presence of a serene and beautiful spirit, redeemed of the Lord from all selfishness, and I have been made thankful for the ability to recognize, and the disposition to love him."

John Woolman, 1720–1772

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bancroft's "History of the United States," Vols. III, IV, V. Fiske's "American Revolution" and "Critical Period." Lecky's "American Revolution." Trevelyan's "The American Revolution." McMaster's "History of the People of the United States," Vols. I, II. Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America," Vol. VI, and "Reader's Handbook of the American Revolution." Higginson's "Larger History of the United States," chaps. 9–12. Sloane's "The French War and Revolution," pp. 116–369. Hart's "Formation of the Union" (Epochs of American History), pp. 42–101. Tyler's "Literary History of the American Revolution." Frothingham's "Rise of the Republic." Walker's "The Making of the Nation" (American History Series). Lossing's "Field Book of the American Revolution." Sparks's "American Biography," 2d series, Vol. II (Otis). Scudder's "Men and Manners in America One Hundred Years Ago." Irving's "Life of Washington." Parton's "Life of Franklin." Hosmer's "Samuel Adams." Tyler's "Patrick Henry." Lodge's "Washington" and "Hamilton." Morse's "Jefferson" and "John Adams." Gay's "Madison." Schouler's "Jefferson" (Makers of America). Sumner's "Hamilton" and "Robert Morris." Trent's "Southern Statesmen of the Old Régime" (Washington, Jefferson, Randolph). Headley's "Washington and his Generals." Alice Brown's "Mercy Warren." Mrs. Goodwin's "Dolly Madison." Mrs. Wharton's "Martha Washington." Mrs. Humphrey's "Catharine Schuyler." Mrs. Ravenel's "Eliza Pinckney." Todd's "Life and Letters of Joel Barlow." Tyler's "Three Men of Letters." Austin's "Philip Freneau." *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. XV ("The Pleiades of Connecticut").

Contemporary Literature. — Hart's "American History told by Contemporaries." "Letters of John and Abigail Adams." Stedman and Hutchinson's "Library of American Literature." Johnston's "American Orations," Vol. I. The "Federalist."

Moore's "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution." Eggleston's "American War Ballads and Lyrics," Vol. I. Franklin's "Works." "Declaration of Independence" and Washington's "Farewell Address" (Maynard's English Classic Series). "Old South Leaflets," 4, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 68, 86, 97, 98, 99.

Illustrative Literature. — Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride." Bryant's "Song of Marion's Men"; "Seventy-six." Holmes's "Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle"; "Independence Bell"; "Ballad of the Boston Tea-party." Emerson's "Boston"; "Concord Hymn." Pierpont's "Warren's Address." Lanier's "Battle of Lexington." Matthews's "Poems of American Patriotism." Mrs. Child's "The Rebels." Cooper's "Spy" and "Pilot." Simms's "Partisan." Miss Sedgwick's "The Linwoods." Cooke's "Virginia Comedians." Kennedy's "Horseshoe Robinson." Butterworth's "Patriot Schoolmaster." Mitchell's "Hugh Wynne." Mrs. Harrison's "Son of the Old Dominion." Ford's "Janice Meredith." Churchill's "Richard Carvel." Webster's "Bunker Hill Orations." Everett's "Orations and Speeches," Vol. III.

CHAPTER III

THE KNICKERBOCKER WRITERS

THE period from 1815 to 1837 may be appropriately called the period of national expansion. The turmoil of war had ceased, English aggression was forever at an end, and the United States were established as a great nation. The party quarrels over the new Constitution were settled, temporarily at least, and an "Era of Good Feeling" was inaugurated. The work of national consolidation had been accomplished, and now the work of national development was pushed vigorously forward. Peace, prosperity, native energy, and the pride of a new-born nationality stimulated enterprise in every direction; enthusiastic effort for expansion was the order of the day.

Period of Expansion

The remarkable expedition of Lewis and Clark, in 1804–1806, to the mouth of the Columbia, led to dreams of golden possibilities in the illimitable West. The defeat of the Indians along the southern and western frontier and the death of Tecumseh, in 1813, opened vast regions to secure settlement, and a stream of emigration began to flow westward that soon spread like a flood over

The Westward Movement

the whole of the Mississippi valley. Then states were rapidly cut out of the wilderness and added to the nation; during the period the "old thirteen" were increased to twenty-six, and between 1810 and 1840 the population advanced from seven to seventeen millions. This sudden transformation of the wilderness becomes more interesting and incredible to us as it becomes more remote. In 1828 a local historian of Ohio wrote: "We stand in the midst of a state which but little more than thirty years ago was all possessed by ruthless savages; and we now see cities and towns, more than an hundred thousand militia, nearly a million inhabitants, two canals, the one nearly seventy and the other three hundred miles in length, a great number of flourishing villages, handsome farmhouses, and every indication of comfort and abundance; and the whole scene has at first view the aspect of fable and enchantment."

This period was also a period of great inventions, which aided material development and revolutionized modern life. In 1807 Fulton launched his first steamboat, and a few years later these boats were transporting emigrants on the western rivers and lakes. In 1825 the Erie Canal was opened; in 1835 Morse set up his first telegraph wire; and in 1838 the first steamship crossed the Atlantic. It was an era of large projections and broad foundations. Every man was making history and adding to the national glory. Life was filled with wild and pictur-

Material Progress

esque experience, the rich material of poetry and romance, not a tithe of which has yet been converted from its crude state into literature. "There was never a clearing made in the forest," says Dr. Holmes, "that did not let in the light on heroes and heroines." Irving's "Tour on the Prairies" and "Captain Bonneville," Cooper's "Pioneers," and Paulding's "Westward Ho" are contemporary records in literary form that have an abiding freshness of interest. But the epic or adequate history of this marvelous western movement is yet to be written.

Coincident with the widespread industrial impulses of the nation there was an awakening of literary impulses toward independent creativeness. American literary genius was born. In 1837 Emerson, in his memorable address at Harvard College on "The American Scholar," said: "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions, arise that must be sung, that will sing themselves." This address was itself received as evidence that the American intellect had achieved its independence. Several literary reputations were already established, and some works of genuine native genius had been produced. From that date our literature exchanged its attitude of dependence and imitation for one of adventurous freedom and self-

American Literary Independence

confidence, sustaining henceforth toward English literature only those mutual relations and reflections that necessarily exist between two literatures of the same language and people.

The year 1837 marks even a more important epoch in English literature. It was the year of Queen Victoria's accession, of Dickens's "Pickwick Papers," and of Carlyle's "French Revolution." The great poets of the Romantic School, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and Scott, were in their graves, and the leading voices of the Victorian choir, the Brownings and Tennyson, were beginning to be heard. Wordsworth and Southey were alive, but silent. The Promethean heat of these poets of revolution in England was borne across the Atlantic to light the fires on our new altars. Wordsworth filled the young Bryant's soul with solemn ecstasy, and the lyric passion of Byron and Moore stirred lesser poets into song; Scott gave models to Cooper; while Irving, though influenced by a conservative taste that led him back to Addison and Goldsmith, in his American sketches and Spanish tales was as genuine a romanticist as Coleridge. Our authors of this period began as imitators, but in "Thanatopsis," "The Spy," and "Rip Van Winkle" were soon recognized the voices of a new realm of literary independence and originality.

The Victorian Age

During the colonial period Boston was the intellectual center of America, and was again to become

the literary capital, but at the beginning of the century the center of literary activity was at New York. Here several young authors were associated in a genial literary and social companionship, remotely suggestive of the club and coffee-house life of English literature in the eighteenth century. Many of these were contributors to the *Knickerbocker Magazine;* some of them were descendants of the old "Knickerbocker families"; hence they have been loosely styled the "Knickerbocker School." The name belongs more strictly to Irving, Paulding, Drake, and Halleck, but associated with these, more or less intimately, were Bryant, Cooper, Dana, Willis, Woodworth, and others whose writings were chiefly published in New York before 1850. The earliest members of the group were called by Poe the "Pioneers of American literature." The central figure of the company, and in some senses the founder of American literature, was Washington Irving.

The "Knickerbocker School"

WASHINGTON IRVING

1783–1859

Washington Irving was born in William Street, New York, April 3, 1783, just as General Washington with his patriot troops took possession of the city. When Washington again came to the city to assume the presidency, the child's Scotch nurse, filled with

the prevailing enthusiasm, followed the hero one day and presented his little namesake. "Please, your honor," said Lizzie, "here's a bairn was named after you." Gently touching the child's head, the great man bestowed a blessing upon his future biographer.

Washington and his Biographer

Washington Irving

Irving was mainly self-educated; he read extensively, enjoying especially books of travel and adventure, and wrote juvenile poems and plays. At sixteen he entered a law office, but finding the work distasteful, studied literature more zealously than law. With what thoroughness he read Addison's "Spectator" is shown by a series of critical and humorous essays written when nineteen for his brother's paper, the *Morning Chronicle*, and signed "Jonathan Oldstyle." During these years he spent much time in wandering along the banks of the Hud-

Early Tastes and Education

son, gathering its romantic and legendary lore, by means of which he afterward gave to the region imperishable literary associations. In 1804 he was sent abroad for a year for his health. He traveled in France and Italy, and in Rome made the acquaintance of Washington Allston, who nearly persuaded him to become an artist. This contact with the art and culture of the Old World was an important part of his education, leading to the tastes and ideals that characterized all his literary work.

Upon his return he was admitted to the bar, but preferred to be a "champion at the tea-parties" rather than a pleader in the courts. His graceful manners, refined tastes, and ready humor made him a universal favorite in society. In 1807, in connection with his brother William and his friend Paulding, he published "Salmagundi, or the Whim-whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff, Esq., and Others," a series of sparkling and successful essays in the manner of the "Spectator" and Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World." Three years later appeared "Knickerbocker's History of New York," a masterpiece of delicious and perennial humor, which was immediately successful at home and abroad. Scott thought it as fine as Dean Swift's best satire, read it aloud to his household, and declared, "our sides have been absolutely sore with laughter." Intended as a mere burlesque of the pretentious work of a local historian, it turned out to be the initial

First Literary Works

volume of original American literature; moreover, it created the historic New Amsterdam, and the Dutch tradition as it is to-day. In this mock-serious description of the fat, somniferous, waddling Dutch burghers, in the good old honest days of the "renowned Wouter van Twiller" and "Peter the Headstrong," with his silver leg and "brimstone-colored breeches," when the "burgomasters, like our aldermen, were generally chosen by weight," when "every woman staid at home, read the Bible, and wore pockets," and every "goede vrouw" made "her husband's linsey-woolsey galligaskins," and when "the truly fashionable gentleman" would "manfully sally forth, with pipe in mouth, to besiege some fair damsel's obdurate heart," and "rarely failed, in the process of time, to smoke the fair enemy into a surrender, upon honorable terms," Irving somewhat offended the descendants of the old Dutch worthies with his irreverent fun-making, but the resentment was soon lost in the general laughter. While writing this book a heavy bereavement came upon him in the death of Matilda Hoffman, to whom he was about to be married; the effects of this event colored his whole subsequent life. It "seemed," he once said, "to give a turn to my whole character and throw some clouds into my disposition which have ever since hung about it."

Irving again went abroad, in 1815, and remained seventeen years, spending the greater part of the time in England. The poets, Southey, Moore, Campbell,

and Rogers were his friends; his happy memories of Scott are preserved in the charming "Recollections of Abbotsford"; and his name will always be associated with that of Shakspere at Stratford, where mementos of his devoted pilgrimage are still kept sacred in the Red Horse Inn. In England he wrote the "Sketch Book," which appeared in 1819, introducing the immortal "Rip Van Winkle" to the world. This was soon followed by "Bracebridge Hall" and "Tales of a Traveler." Irving was now famous in two continents. "Geoffrey Crayon is the most fashionable fellow of the day," said the English painter, Leslie. "His Crayon — I know it by heart," said Byron, "his writings are my delight." Even the cynical reviewers, who read American books only to abuse them, loudly praised the "Sketch Book." Indeed, this little volume of essays, inspired by scenes upon both sides of the ocean, was the first efficacious means of closing the breach of enmity and prejudice between England and America.

Residence in Europe

Three years were spent in Spain, in the preparation of the "Life of Columbus." For some time he resided in the famous palace of the Alhambra, and obtained material for three other works of enduring beauty, "The Alhambra," the "Conquest of Granada," and "Legends of Spain." In 1830 he was made Secretary of Legation at the English court, and was honored with the medal of King George from the Royal

Society of Literature and the degree of D.C.L. from the University of Oxford. Two years later he returned to America and was received by his admiring countrymen with overwhelming enthusiasm. He now established a home upon the

Return to America

Irving's Home, "Sunnyside"

Hudson, called "Sunnyside," a pretty stone cottage in the Dutch style, "modeled after the cocked hat of Peter the Headstrong." Here he spent the next ten years in quiet literary labor, producing "Recollections of Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey," "Wolfert's Roost," "Mahomet and his Successors,"

the delightful "Life of Goldsmith," and three volumes of western adventure.

During Irving's long residence abroad the settlement of the great West had been going forward, and upon his return he found that the frontier had been pushed beyond the Mississippi. Possessed by "a great curiosity" to see something of the wild life of this vast region that was attracting so much attention, he made a trip to some of the remote trading posts of Missouri and Arkansas. This experience was embodied in a "Tour on the Prairies," one of our very best records of western adventure. A friendship with John Jacob Astor led to the writing of "Astoria," an interesting book constructed from the dry commercial records of the settlement established by Mr. Astor at the mouth of the Columbia River. At the house of Mr. Astor, Irving met a veteran hunter and trapper, from whom he obtained materials for the "Adventures of Captain Bonneville," a narrative of thrilling adventure in the Rocky Mountains.

Western Adventure

In 1842 Irving received, through the recommendation of Daniel Webster, the appointment as Minister to Spain; but the life of courts and palaces had lost its charm for him; after three years he writes: "I long to be once more back at dear little Sunnyside, while I have yet strength and good spirits to enjoy the simple pleasures of the country, and to rally a happy family group once more about me. I grudge

every year of absence that rolls by." The following year "the impatient longing of his heart was gratified," says his biographer, "and he found himself restored to his home for the thirteen years of happy life still remaining to him." His career was fittingly rounded with the publication of his "Life of Washington." While the praises of this work were loudly sounding death came, November 28, 1859, and he was buried near Sleepy Hollow, amid the scenes loved by him through life and made forever memorable by his pen.

Last Years

The personality of Irving is one of the most lovable in our literature, and the presence of this gracious personality in his writings is always a refining and beneficent influence; no one reads his books without being made happier and better. Grace of language, chaste and noble thought, idealism and romance, a chivalrous regard for pure womanhood, genial humor, tenderness and sympathy were the qualities of both his life and his works. "His books," says Warner, "are wholesome, full of sweetness and charm, of humor without any sting, of amusement without any stain." His mind was not profound, and he did not discuss the deeper problems of life; an ideal and spiritual simplicity was the restful attitude of his thought. His philosophy was one of optimism and good cheer, and his attitude toward his fellow-men was one of sympathetic interest and confidence. "I have always had an opinion," he says,

Personal and Literary Qualities

"that much good might be done by keeping mankind in good humor with one another;" and he refused to believe "this to be so very bad a world as it is represented." His genius was reminiscent and dwelt most naturally and contentedly in the fields of history, tradition, and romance. The enchanted air of Moorish Spain was an inspiration to him. Mellow England, grown old and rich with history and song, was always dear to him. "I cannot describe," he says, "the mute but deep-felt enthusiasm with which I have contemplated a vast monastic ruin like Tintern Abbey, buried in the bosom of a quiet valley, and shut up from the world as though it had existed merely for itself; or a warrior pile, like Conway Castle, standing in stern loneliness on its rocky height, a mere hollow yet threatening phantom of departed power." But there was a past in American history which he loved equally well. He did for the region of the Hudson what Scott did for his native land, investing it with an atmosphere of poetry as distinct and national as that which rests upon the Tweed and the banks and braes of Yarrow.

Thackeray, in his beautiful tribute to Irving, calls him "the Goldsmith of our age"; and Dr. Holmes speaks of him as that "pure, tender, play- Critical Estimates
ful, loving author, dear to both English worlds, but dearest to us as the day star of our American literature." "His gifts," says Beers, "were sentiment and humor, with an imagination sufficiently fertile, and an observation sufficiently acute to support

those two main qualities, but inadequate to the service of strong passion or subtle thinking, though his pathos, indeed, sometimes reached intensity. His humor was always delicate and kindly; his sentiment never degenerated into sentimentality." "God bless him!" exclaimed Byron, when reading the "Sketch Book," "he is a genius; and he has something better than genius — a heart."

As an essayist Irving was a student of Addison, but the essays in the "Sketch Book" and "Bracebridge Hall" are distinguished from their models by original qualities quite as clearly as are the essays of Goldsmith and Lamb. The essay upon Westminster Abbey is as worthy of its noble theme as Addison's essay with the same title, and the Christmas sketches gain more than they lose by comparison with the Sir Roger de Coverley papers. Irving's subjects are generally foreign, but he makes them his own by investing them with his fascinating individuality. More than by the pure, classic, polished language, which so astonished the English because written by an American, one is charmed by the distinctive atmosphere of the essays. Everything is tender, delicate, poetic, and beautiful; and a gentle melancholy as of Indian summer often pervades the scenes. The rollicking humor of "Knickerbocker" is chastened and refined in the essays, and pathos and humor often mingle like mist and sunshine in autumn afternoons. To a writer so filled with poetic and ro-

Essays and Tales

mantic sentiment it was an easy transition from descriptions of Old World life and rural scenery to romantic tales like "Rip Van Winkle," "The Spectre Bridegroom," and the "Tales of the Alhambra." So excellent was his skill in constructing an artistic short story that more credit is due him than has generally been given for establishing the type in American literature.

Irving's work as a historian and biographer may be neglected, but cannot be forgotten. For the scholarly investigation and devotion to minute details, characteristic of modern historical writing, his genius was not adapted, but in describing great episodes and painting stately portraits, colored with all the poetic and romantic possibilities of the subject, he has had few superiors. "His biographies," says Richard Garnett, "however deficient in research, bear the stamp of genuine artistic intelligence, equally remote from compilation and disquisition. In execution they are almost faultless; the narrative is easy, the style pellucid, and the writer's judgment nearly always in accordance with the general verdict of history. They will not, therefore, be easily superseded, and indeed Irving's productions are in general impressed with that signet of classical finish which guarantees the permanency of literary work more surely than direct utility or even intellectual power." One of the biographies is almost unique. The "Life of Goldsmith" is a classic that can never lose its

As a Biographer

charm, perfect in its grace of composition, and perfect in its gracious tone and warmth of sympathy. The volatile, thriftless, lovable poet was as near to the heart of Irving as his own vagabondish Rip Van Winkle.

"Irving seems to have been born," says Warner, "with a rare sense of literary proportion and form; into this as into a mold were run his apparently lazy and really acute observations of life." In accounting for his style, it is not enough to say that he mastered the best English prose of the eighteenth century.

Irving's Style

"There remains a large margin for wonder how, with his want of training, he could have elaborated a style which is distinctively his own, and is as copious, felicitous in the choice of words, flowing, spontaneous, flexible, engaging, clear, and as little wearisome when read continuously in quantity as any in the English tongue. This is saying a great deal, though it is not claiming for him the compactness, nor the robust vigor, nor the depth of thought, of many other masters in it. It is sometimes praised for its simplicity. It is certainly lucid, but its simplicity is not that of Benjamin Franklin's style; it is often ornate, not seldom somewhat diffuse, and always exceedingly melodious. It is noticeable for its metaphorical felicity. But it was not in the sympathetic nature of the author to come sharply to the point. It is much to have merited the eulogy of Campbell, that he had 'added clarity to the English tongue.'" [1]

[1] Charles Dudley Warner's "Life of Irving," p. 293.

Class Study. — *Sketch Book:* The Voyage; Rural Life in England; Rip Van Winkle; Rural Funerals; The Spectre Bridegroom; Westminster Abbey; Christmas; Christmas Eve; Christmas Day; The Christmas Dinner; Stratford-on-Avon; The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.

Alhambra: Palace of the Alhambra; Inhabitants of the Alhambra; Hall of Ambassadors; Tower of Comares; Court of Lions; The Moor's Legacy; The Three Beautiful Princesses; The Rose of the Alhambra.

Class Reading. — *Bracebridge Hall:* The Stout Gentleman; The Hall; Ready-money Jack; A Literary Antiquary; St. Mark's Eve; May Day Customs; Village Worthies; The Rookery; The Wedding.

Crayon Miscellany: Abbotsford; Tour on the Prairies.

Knickerbocker's History of New York, Bk. III, chaps. 1–4.

Biography and Criticism. — Pierre M. Irving's "Life of Washington Irving." Warner's "Washington Irving" (American Men of Letters). Hill's "Life of Washington Irving." Stoddard's "Biographical Sketch" (Kaaterskill edition). "Irvingiana." Boynton's "Washington Irving" (Riverside Biographical Series). Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol. XIII (Richard Garnett). Shepard's "Pen Pictures of Earlier Victorian Authors." Curtis's "Literary and Social Essays." Thackeray's "Nil Nisi Bonum" (*Roundabout Papers*, or *Harper's Monthly*, March, 1860). Burton's "Literary Likings." Mitchell's "Bound Together." "Studies of Irving" by Warner, Bryant, and Putnam. Warner's "The Work of Washington Irving." Bryant's "Orations and Addresses." Richardson's "American Literature." Howells's "My Literary Passions." Saunders's "Character Studies." Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Library of the World's Best Literature. *The Critic*, March 31, 1883 (Irving Centenary Number). Hazlitt's "Spirit of the Age." Jeffrey's "Bracebridge Hall" (Modern British Essayists). Wendell's "Literary History of America." Longfellow's "In the Churchyard at Tarrytown."

James Kirke Paulding, Irving's relative by marriage and partner in the "Salmagundi" papers, was born near New York, in 1779. His father, whose house stood "within the lines," sacrificed his large property to the patriot cause. His education was obtained in a "log hut" and "cost first and last," he says, "about fifteen dollars, certainly quite as much as it was worth." At nineteen he became associated with the Irvings, and in a few years was successfully engaged with humorous and satirical writing. For twelve years he held a government position at the port of New York, and was Secretary of the Navy under Van Buren. His pleasant home, "Placentia," was at Hyde Park on the Hudson, where he died in 1860.

James K. Paulding, 1779–1860

At the beginning of the War of 1812 Paulding wrote "The Diverting History of John Bull and Brother Jonathan," a satire in the style of Arbuthnot, which was very popular in both countries, and "The Lay of the Scotch Fiddle," a parody upon Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel," satirizing the English operations in Chesapeake Bay. "John Bull in America" and "The Traveler's Guide" were clever burlesques upon English ignorance and prejudice and the guidebook grandiloquence of the day. "Letters from the South by a Northern Man" contain good descriptions of scenery in the Old Dominion. In 1818 "The Backwoodsman" appeared, a poem in six books and three thousand verses of the stereotyped

Satirical Works

heroic measure; but it was only a nine days' wonder. His claim with posterity as a poet rests solely upon his familiar —

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,

found in the novel "Köningsmarke," a burlesque upon Cooper's "Pioneers." His "Westward Ho" is interesting as a picture of frontier life in Kentucky, and his "Life of Washington" was excellent in its day. The only book that still lives is "The Dutchman's Fireside," which reached a wide and worthy fame. Here Paulding described the whimsical characteristics of early Dutch times, the poetic beauties of the Hudson, the adventurous experiences of pioneer life, and the ominous depths of the neighboring wilderness with an affectionate fidelity akin to Irving's.

Paulding complained in old age: "The world has not done me justice as an author." This is perhaps true, but his satirical "whim-whams" and breezy Brother-Jonathanism were in their nature ephemeral. His writing lacks substance and the finish of style necessary to permanency, and his humor is too generally boisterous and unrefined. He was always a pioneer, and never outgrew the crudeness of his exuberant Americanism; in this he is a contrast to Irving, who cultivated his art in all its refinements under the combined influence of old England and new America.

Many books of this period of pioneer authorship, though of meagre literary merit, possess a permanent historic interest. Their authors, while writing very indifferent fiction, often unconsciously wrote very good history; and from the yellow pages of these forgotten volumes may be gathered excellent material for the history of frontier civilization. Wilson's appreciative characterization inclines one to brush the dust from some of these old-time favorites. "Miss Sedgwick ('Hope Leslie,' 'The Linwoods') has given us many charming pictures of primitive customs and feelings in New England; Mrs. Kirkland ('A New Home: Who'll Follow,' 'Forest Life,' 'Western Clearings') described with great truthfulness the new homes of Michigan; Judge Hall ('Legends of the West,' 'Letters from the West') successfully delineated the border experiences of Illinois; Doctor Bird ('Nick of the Woods') has given us graphic sketches of pioneer life in Kentucky; Kennedy portrayed life in the 'Old Dominion'; Simms has written many inimitable chapters concerning the early days of the Carolinas; Judge Longstreet ('Georgia Scenes') held a mirror up to nature in his humorous and graphic Georgia scenes; and Thorpe ('The Hive of the Bee Hunter') lifted the veil from the lodge of the hunter in the southwest; but we may safely affirm that none of these local pictures surpass in minute truthfulness and interest Mr. Paulding's delightful sketches of colonial life in New York during the days of the French War, as described in the 'Dutchman's Fireside.' It will not abuse any man's leisure to read this admirable description of the genuine simplicity of life in New York a hundred and twenty-five years ago. Some of the old mansions of the Schuylers and Van Rensselaers still remain with us; but the actors and customs of those Doric days, to use a favorite phrase of our author, have passed away forever."[1]

Descriptions of Frontier Life

[1] James Grant Wilson's "Bryant and his Friends," p. 141

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

1794–1878

William Cullen Bryant was born at Cummington, Mass., November 3, 1794. He traced his ancestry on both sides directly to the Pilgrims of Plymouth. His mother was a descendant of the famous John Alden, through whom he could claim kinship with Longfellow; to her was due much of the lofty integrity of his character. To the father, who was a physician much esteemed for his learning, he owed his poetic impulse; it was he who

> taught my youth
> The art of verse, and in the bud of life
> Offered me to the muses.

At sixteen he entered Williams College, then an institution consisting of a president, one professor, and two tutors. There he remained but seven months, owing to the limited means of his father; he then studied law, and until 1825 maintained a successful practice at Great Barrington.

Bryant began verse-making in his eighth year, with a paraphrase of the first chapter of Job and a poetical address before his school. In his thirteenth year he produced a political satire of over five hundred lines, entitled "The Embargo, or Sketches of the Times," which received the honor of publication. Before he was sixteen he had written more than forty pieces of

verse, all imitative of the prevailing English models, and containing no suggestion of the qualities that were soon to characterize him as a poet. In 1810, the year he entered college, he came upon Wordsworth's "Lyrical Ballads," which had appeared in 1798; here he found for the first time poetic expression of his own undefined feeling for nature. "Upon opening the book," he says, "a thousand springs seemed to gush up at once in my heart, and the face of nature of a sudden to change into a strange freshness and life."

Early Verse-making

It was his habit, early formed and continued through life, whenever he could "steal an hour from study and care," to roam alone in the fields and "pathless woods," listening long

> To winds that brought into their silent depths
> The murmurs of the mountain waterfalls.

With Wordsworth as his teacher he now learned rapidly that "various language" of nature, of which he was soon to give a sublime interpretation. It was during one of these solitary rambles, in 1811, that "Thanatopsis" was composed, probably the grandest poem ever written by so young a poet. Contrary to his custom, he did not give it to his father for criticism, but hid it in a desk where six years later it was found by Dr. Bryant, and published in the *North American Review*. During the year 1821 he was married to the "fairest of the rural

Communion with Nature

maids," wrote his longest poem, "The Ages," for a meeting of the Phi Beta Kappa society of Harvard, and published his first collection of poems, only eight in all, but such poems as had never been written in America. As this little volume of forty-four pages is one of the chief foundation-stones in the structure of our national literature, it is of interest to know the titles of these eight poems. They are, "The Ages," "To a Waterfowl," "Fragment from Simonides," "Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood," "The Yellow Violet," "The Song," "Green River," and "Thanatopsis." Five of these poems represent the highest reach of Bryant's genius. The little book found readers even in England, and a writer in *Blackwood* graciously admitted: "Bryant is no mean poet."

William Cullen Bryant

Bryant was ill at ease in his profession, conscious of a perversion of his poetic nature in being "forced to drudge for the dregs of men," and therefore in 1825 he abandoned the law, went to New York as a "literary adventurer," became editor of the *New York Review*, and soon after editor-in-chief of the *Evening Post*, in which position he remained during his life. As a journalist he achieved wide influence and honor by the steady endeavor to lift the ideals of politics and citizenship. A second volume of poems was published in 1832, which was reprinted in England through the kind offices of Washington Irving, and won the reluctant praise of the English critics. Wordsworth, it is said, learned "Thanatopsis" by heart. Henceforth until the last year of his life new poems appeared at infrequent intervals, in which were always repeated with new beauties the same sublime harmonies of nature and the soul with which his youth had been enchanted. He was an eager traveler, and made six visits to the Old World, the literary fruits of which were, besides a few short poems, "Letters of a Traveler" and "Letters from the East." These, with a volume of "Orations and Addresses," constitute his prose works.

Journalism

In 1866 occurred the death of his wife, who for forty years had been "the brightness of his life"; this event is the theme of the pathetic poem, "October, 1866." Partly as a means of combating this grief he made his translation of

Last Years

Homer, which is probably on the whole the best complete metrical version of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" in the language. After this crowning achievement his life passed, as he had hoped, "in long serenity away." Always an active supporter of public movements for promoting art, literature, or benevolence, he was frequently called by his fellow-citizens to assume the chief honor at public festivals. While performing such a duty, the delivery of an address at the unveiling of a statue to Mazzini in Central Park, he was stricken by the heat of the sun, and died a few days later, June 12, 1878. The end came, as he had fancifully wished fifty-three years before, "in flowery June," the season of

> Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom.

Bryant is a poet of narrow limitations, both in the scope and variety of themes, and in the methods of treatment, but within his limitations he is a master. Although often urged by his friends to write a long poem, something large like an epic or drama, he was never tempted into these broader and more alluring fields. His poems are all short, their average length being only seventy-five lines; the volume of his work is small, only about two hundred poems in all; and the whole is characterized by a uniform excellence that evinces the constant exercise of artistic restraint. There was no expansion of his genius, the tone and quality of his poetry did not

change; in "The Flood of Years," written in his eighty-second year, the solemn cadences of "Thanatopsis" were repeated. His thought dwells habitually upon the sublimity of nature, and its relations to the transitory life of man. Nearly three fourths of his poems are direct suggestions from nature. To her shrine he would retreat whenever from the turmoil of the business world he sought relief in the solemn services of song.

> While I stood
> In Nature's loneliness, I was with one
> With whom I early grew familiar, — one
> Who never had a frown for me, whose voice
> Never rebuked me for the hour I stole
> From cares I loved not, but of which the world
> Deems highest, to converse with her.

He has been called the "American Wordsworth," but the epithet is only measurably correct; the two poets worship in the same temple, but each in a manner quite his own. Stedman better calls him "a philosophic minstrel of the woods and waters, the foremost of American landscape poets." Simplicity is the most obvious quality of his work, a simplicity made impressive by perfection of workmanship. His thoughts are common, and the subjects of his meditations familiar, but in his treatment the universal experiences of life, death, and nature become profound. The attitude of his thought is one of calm, austere resignation, like the "steady gaze" of his North star in its "cold skies." Compare "To

Poetic Qualities

a Waterfowl" with Shelley's "Skylark"; the one is tranquil contemplation, the other is restless, passionate aspiration. There is no rapture in his song, no swift ecstasy of ideal delight. Nature to him is a stately cathedral, in the cool depths of whose aisles he meditates his deep-voiced harmonies. Now and then his fancy could be happily playful, as in the "Planting of the Apple Tree," and the "Wind and Stream"; and upon the commonest flowers of the woods his best lyric gift was bestowed. He is the poet of the "Yellow Violet" and the "Fringed Gentian," as Emerson is the poet of the "Rhodora," and he knew as only a poet can know

> All the flowers
> That tuft the woodland floor, or overarch
> The streamlet.

His language is simple Saxon speech, used with its best grace, beauty, and strength. His verse, always technically correct, flows as smoothly and musically as the pebbly brooks he loved, and always

> Pure as the dew that filters through the rose.

Two verse forms were his favorites, the iambic quatrain in eight-syllabled lines, as in "A Day Dream," occasionally varied as in "Autumn Woods," and blank verse, in which he achieved his masterpieces; only in the latter was he truly original.

Bryant's Blank Verse

> The hills
> Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun; the vales
> Stretching in pensive quietness between;
> The venerable woods; rivers that move
> In majesty, and the complaining brooks
> That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
> Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste, —
> Are but the solemn decorations all
> Of the great tomb of man.

This is magnificent harmony; thought, words, and music are in perfect accord. It is not necessary to bring Milton and Wordsworth into the comparison to perceive the lofty distinction of such verse as that of "Thanatopsis," "A Forest Hymn," and "The Flood of Years." Of his blank verse Stedman says: "The essence of its cadence, pauses, rhythm, should be termed American, and it is the best ever written in the New World. Blank verse is the easiest and the most difficult of all measures; the poorest in poor hands; the finest when written by a true poet. Whoever essays it is a poet disrobed; he must rely upon his natural gifts; his defects cannot be hidden. In this measure Bryant was at his height, and he owes to it the most enduring portion of his fame. However narrow his range, we must own that he was first in the first. He reached the upper air at once in 'Thanatopsis,' and again and again, though none too frequently, he renewed his flights, and, like his own waterfowl, pursued his 'solitary way.'"

In view of the prevailing influence of the conven-

tional eighteenth-century poetry, it is somewhat surprising that Bryant, even with the aid of Wordsworth, broke away so boldly from the school of Pope There are traces of English influence in his work; even "Thanatopsis" owes something to so crude a poem as Blair's "Grave." But the little volume of 1821 and its companions of 1832 and 1836 are quite as indicative of an awakened spirit of literary independence as Emerson's "American Scholar." Bryant discovered poetry in the severe aspects of his New England surroundings, and became at once original and American. "He is original because he is sincere," said Emerson, "a true painter of the face of the country and of the sentiment of his own people. It is his proper praise that he first, and he only, made known to mankind our northern landscape, its summer splendor, its autumn russet, its winter lights and glooms." Curtis regarded his poetry as "intensely and distinctively American. He was a man of scholarly accomplishments, familiar with other languages and literature. But there is no tone or taste of anything not peculiarly American in his poetry. It is as characteristic as the wine of the Catawba grape."

Bryant's Americanism

In a final summary of his qualities, Curtis says: "The genius of Bryant, not profuse and imperial, neither intense with dramatic passion nor throbbing with lyrical fervor, but calm, meditative, pure, has its true symbol among his native hills, a mountain

spring untainted by mineral or slime of earth or reptile venom, cool, limpid, and serene. His verse is the virile expression of the healthy communion of a strong, sound man with the familiar aspects of nature, and its broad, clear, open-air quality has a certain Homeric suggestiveness. It is not the poetry of an eager enthusiasm; it is not fascinating and overpowering to the sensibility of youth. It is the essentially meditative character which makes the atmosphere of his poetic world more striking than its forms; and thus his contribution of memorable lines to our literature is not great, although there are some lines of unsurpassed majesty, and again touches of fancy and imagination as airy and delicate as the dance of fairies upon a moonlit lawn."

Curtis's Estimate

Class Study. — Thanatopsis; To a Waterfowl; Autumn Woods; Evening Wind; Hymn to the North Star; Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood; The Death of the Flowers; The Past; Robert of Lincoln; To the Fringed Gentian; The Planting of the Apple Tree; Our Fellow Worshipers; The West Wind; The Wind and Stream; A Forest Hymn.

Class Reading. — June; Hymn to Death; The Land of Dreams; Song of Marion's Men; The Crowded Street; The Antiquity of Freedom; "Oh Mother of a Mighty Race"; A Day Dream; Life; The Stream of Life; The Little People of the Snow; The Snow Shower; "Oh Fairest of the Rural Maids"; October; The Battle Field; The Song of the Sower; The Flood of Years.

Biography and Criticism. — Godwin's "Life of William Cullen Bryant." Bigelow's "William Cullen Bryant" (American Men of Letters). Symington's "William Cullen Bryant." Hill's "Life of William Cullen Bryant." Wilson's "Bryant

and his Friends." Stedman's "Poets of America." Whipple's "Literature and Life." Curtis's "Orations and Addresses," Vol. III. Richardson's "American Literature." Wilkinson's "A Free Lance in the Field of Life and Letters." Wendell's "Literary History of America." Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Saunders's "Character Studies." Godwin's "Out of the Past." Deshler's "Afternoons with the Poets."

Poets' Tributes. — Stoddard's "The Dead Master," "Vates Patriae," and "At Roslyn." Holmes's "Bryant's Seventieth Birthday." Lowell's "On Board the 76." Whittier's "Bryant on his Birthday." Taylor's "Epicedium" and "Chant for the Bryant Festival." Julia Ward Howe's "A Leaf from the Bryant Chaplet." Stedman's "The Death of Bryant."

HALLECK, DRAKE, AND DANA

Fitz-Greene Halleck was born in Guilford, Conn., in 1790. He began rhyming, we are told, as soon as he had learned to write. "He couldn't help it," said a schoolmate. At fifteen he became a bookkeeper in one of the village stores, and at twenty-one found employment in a New York banking house. For sixteen years he was in the office of John Jacob Astor, who at his death, in 1848, left him an annuity of some "forty pounds a year." Upon this modest fortune he retired to his native town, where he died, in 1867. A fine monument was erected over his grave and dedicated upon the eightieth anniversary of his birth, the first honor of the kind ever bestowed upon the memory of an American poet.

Fitz-Greene Halleck, 1790–1867

It may be doubtful whether Halleck's name is

> One of the few, the immortal names
> That were not born to die,

but the poem that closes with these lines, "Marco Bozzaris," is likely long to hold a place of honor in our literature. In 1822 a visit to Europe inspired "Alnwick Castle" and "Burns," and in 1827 the first collection of his poems was published. Halleck and Drake were devoted friends, "the Damon and Pythias of American poets"; in 1819 they wrote together the "Croaker Papers," humorous and satirical poems upon the men and manners of New York society, published in the *Evening Post* and signed "Croaker & Co." These bright but flashy papers delighted the town for a time with their novel and witty rhymes and then were quickly forgotten. No elegy is more deservedly popular than the simple and tender poem "On the Death of Drake," beginning: —

> Green be the turf above thee,
> Friend of my better days!
> None knew thee but to love thee,
> Nor named thee but to praise.

The generous praises bestowed upon Halleck are somewhat out of proportion to his real merits; but there was that humane and sympathetic "touch of nature" in the man and his verses that "makes the whole world kin." His friend Joseph Rodman Drake, though a much less popular favorite, was a much

finer poet. He was born in New York in 1795. When five years old, it is said, he wrote conundrums in verse, and promising poems at ten. He studied medicine and became a druggist. At twenty-one he wrote "The Culprit Fay," upon which his reputation chiefly rests. In a discussion with Cooper, Halleck, and others, it was maintained that American streams furnish no such possibilities of poetry as the legend-haunted streams of Scotland; Drake dissented, and to support his position, in three days produced his exquisite poem with its scene laid in the Highlands of the Hudson. It is a dainty fairy tale, told in melodious verse, with airy gracefulness of scene and imagery. Halleck pronounced it "the best thing of the kind in the English language." His stirring lyric, "The American Flag," is "certainly," says Beers, "the most spirited thing of the kind in our poetic literature." The early death of Drake was a serious loss to our literature, for there was great promise in what he did. His fine-souled, poetic nature drew to itself strong attachments. "There will be less sunshine for me hereafter," said Halleck, "now that Joe is gone."

Joseph Rodman Drake, 1795-1820

In 1825, in the first number of the *New York Review*, edited by Bryant, Richard Henry Dana's earliest poem, "The Dying Raven," appeared in company with "Marco Bozzaris." Dana was born in Boston in 1787, and died in 1879. Born with the Constitution and before Byron, Keats, and Shelley, he lived through

the administration of Grant and saw the best work of Tennyson completed. He spent three years at Harvard, practiced law for a few years, was one of the founders and editors of the *North American Review*, took part in the bitter Unitarian controversy against his cousin, Dr. Channing, but led mainly the meditative life of a literary recluse. In 1821 he began publishing *The Idle Man* in New York, a periodical of essays much like the "Sketch Book," to which Bryant and Allston contributed poems. It was too refined to be successful, and only seven numbers appeared. In 1827 his little volume, "The Buccaneer, and Other Poems," appeared. A course of lectures on Shakspere, given in several cities in 1839, the Shaksperian scholar, Verplanck, thought "should be cherished as among the finest fruits of American scholarship, genius, and critical ability."

Richard Henry Dana, 1787–1879

Dana was a poet by right of descent from Anne Bradstreet, as well as by inherent gifts. But his muse was too grave and contemplative to be popular. A few delicate lyrics like "The Little Beach Bird" have a permanent beauty. "The Buccaneer," though containing passages of fine poetry, is too severe in both style and feeling, lacking the simplicity and fluency of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," by which it was inspired. Dana once remarked that for the literary work of thirty years he had received "less than four hundred dollars." His influence as poet and

critic, was exerted chiefly in giving to his fellow-authors lessons of taste and independence. For this he deserves to remain "one of the prominences of our literature."

The united achievement of these three poets was meager in amount, but each produced something that still lives, enough to show that they had caught a spark at least of the divine fire, and had felt its glow. The poets of the Revolutionary group were poets only by virtue of their patriotic energy and patient imitation of poor models. Halleck and his friends made a long stride toward original and self-reliant poetry. The Romantic School in England inspired, but did not dominate, them. Dana was attracted to Coleridge; in Halleck's poems there were echoes of Byron; Drake wished that he might "lie stretched upon a rainbow with Tom Campbell in his hand." In Bryant's early poetry and Dana's prose criticism, Wordsworth's sublime message was first clearly reported in the New World.

Work of the Pioneer Poets

"The poetic literature of a land," wrote Bayard Taylor, "is the finer and purer ether above its material growth and the vicissitudes of its history. Where it was vacant and barren for us, except, perchance, a feeble lark-note here and there, Dana, Halleck, and Bryant rose together on steadier wings, and gave voices to the solitude — Dana with a broad, grave undertone, like that of the sea; Bryant with a sound as of the wind in summer woods, and the fall of

waters in mountain-dells; and Halleck with strains blown from a silver trumpet, breathing manly fire and courage. Many voices have followed theirs; the ether rings with new melodies; but we shall not forget the forerunners who rose in advance of their welcome, and created their own audience by their songs."

Class Reading. — Halleck's "Marco Bozzaris"; "On the Death of Drake"; "Burns"; "Alnwick Castle"; "Connecticut." Drake's "American Flag"; "The Culprit Fay." Dana's "The Little Beach Bird"; "The Moss Supplicateth for the Poet."

Biography and Criticism. — Bryant's "Orations and Addresses" (Halleck). Wilson's "Life of Halleck" and "Bryant and his Friends." Taylor's "Essays and Notes." Whipple's "Essays and Reviews," Vol. II (Dana). *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1877 (Halleck). Poe's "Literati." Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Whittier's "Fitz-Greene Halleck."

Some of the minor writers of the Knickerbocker group are remembered only through single famous pieces. Samuel Woodworth (1785–1842), a journalist and writer of patriotic songs and odes during the War of 1812, is known only by his "Old Oaken Bucket." James Fenno Hoffman (1806–1884), founder of the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, wrote "Sparkling and Bright" and the spirited "Monterey." George Perkins Morris (1802–1864), editor, with Willis, of the *Mirror* and the *Home Journal*, a lesser Tom Moore in his day, whose songs were universally admired, is now remembered as the author of "Woodman, Spare that Tree." John Howard Payne (1791–1852) was a successful actor and playwright. During a wandering life in Europe he wrote numerous dramatic pieces, in one of which, "Clari," an opera, appeared the immortal "Home, Sweet Home," which, it is said, made the fortune of every one connected with it except the author. The song was written in

Minor Members of the Choir

a room in the Palais Royal, Paris. After his thirteenth year the author never enjoyed the blessings of home, of which he sang with such sweet pathos. He died at Tunis, Africa, and his ashes now rest in Oak Hill Cemetery, Washington, beneath a noble monument. Gulian Crommelin Verplanck (1786–1870) was the scholarly editor of Shakspere and friend of Bryant, with whom he was associated in editing "The Talisman," an annual that enjoyed a sunny nook in that period of our literature. Alfred Billings Street (1811–1881), author of "Frontenac," was praised by Longfellow, Bryant, and Whipple for the fidelity and vividness of his descriptions of nature. Henry Theodore Tuckerman (1813–1871), a pleasant essayist, was the author of "Characteristics of Literature," "Thoughts on the Poets," and many other volumes of sketches and poems.

Several Connecticut poets of this period reached a fame through the "Annuals" and the New York journals that was once received as evidence of genius. John Pierpont (1785–1866), poet, preacher, and philanthropist, and chaplain in the Civil War at the age of seventy-six, gave us the sturdy "Warren's Address," and the meritorious "Passing Away," "Pilgrim Fathers," and "My Child." James Abraham Hillhouse (1789–1841) was one of the earliest poets in America to write a poetic drama. In 1839 he published "Dramas, Discourses, and Other Pieces," in which the influence of Byron is easily traced. James Gates Percival (1795–1857), physician, geologist, and linguist, was once assumed to be a great poet by virtue of profuse rhyming. "He is pertinaciously and unappeasedly dull," says Lowell, "he never in his life wrote a remembrable verse." A few short pieces, however, as "To Seneca Lake," and "The Coral Grove," are still familiar and of worth. Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791–1865) wrote verse and prose to the extent of fifty-six volumes. Her blank verse, studied after Bryant, is not without merit, as in "Niagara." The principle of her literary work was, she says, "to aim at being an instrument of good," and this aim she undoubtedly realized.

Among these "gentle stars of the East" there were in Bos-

ton, besides Dana, Charles Sprague (1791–1875), a prominent banker, whose "Shakspere Ode," "The Winged Worshipers," and "Ode to Art" have had a wide reading-book celebrity; Washington Allston (1779–1843), one of the earliest propagators of culture in America, esteemed as "the greatest of American painters," a graceful versifier, lecturer on art, and author of the romance "Monaldi," which Whipple thinks deserves a "permanent place in our literature"; and Epes Sargent (1813–1880), an author and compiler of many books, who will be remembered for the song, "A Life on the Ocean Wave." Maria Brooks (1795–1845) published in Boston, in 1825, "Zophiel; or, the Bride of Seven," on the strength of which the poet Southey pronounced her "the most impassioned and most imaginative of all poetesses." This highly colored Eastern romance, in its theme similar to Moore's "Loves of the Angels," founded on a story in the Apocryphal book of Tobit, is an interesting but decadent product of the English romantic school. Many other minor singers there were in this period, whose rushlight fame, bright for a little time, has disappeared in dusky oblivion. The memory of one of these, however, Samuel Francis Smith (1808–1895), will be kept green, for in 1832 he wrote our one fine national hymn, "America."

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

1789–1851

The beautiful village of Cooperstown, New York, one hundred years ago was a small settlement upon the very borderland of American civilization. Beyond stretched vast, unexplored forests that echoed the sounds of Indians and wild animals still undisturbed by the white man's gun. Here James Fenimore Cooper spent his boyhood. feeding his imagination

with the beauty and mystery of the primeval wilderness and laying in rich stores of romantic experience to be used later in those remarkable forest tales that still captivate each succeeding generation of young readers in all parts of the globe.

Cooper was born in Burlington, New Jersey, September 15, 1789. The following year his father removed to his large estates on the shores of Otsego lake, and became the founder and leading citizen of the town named in his honor. A reminiscence of his manorial eminence is preserved in the character of "Judge Temple" in "The Pioneers." James entered Yale College at thirteen, was dismissed during the third year for misconduct, and in 1806 entered the navy, serving at first as a common sailor and reaching finally the rank of lieutenant. For a time he was stationed at Oswego, then a few rude houses in the wilderness, and there became familiar with the scenes so vividly pictured in "The Pathfinder." His naval career was cut short by marriage in 1811, after which for several years he lived in the

James Fenimore Cooper

Early Years

vicinity of New York city, his unsettled pursuits and tastes giving no intimation of his future work.

His career of authorship began in a trifling incident. While reading a novel to his wife he remarked that he believed he could write a better novel himself; urged to the proof, he soon produced his first work, "Precaution," published in 1820. It was a sentimental story in imitation of the fashionable English novel of the period, dealing with English society life of which the writer was entirely ignorant, and worthless as a work of art; but its reception by his friends and the public encouraged him to a second trial. Accordingly in 1821 — the year which saw Bryant's first volume of poems — "The Spy," a tale of the Revolution, appeared. This met with instantaneous success, in Europe as well as at home, and established the author's reputation. He had found his talent, and from an amateur farmer he was suddenly transformed into a famous author.

Beginning of Authorship

Cooper's genius was limited to two sources of inspiration, his early familiarity with frontier life and his experience on the ocean With the exception of "The Spy," and parts of one or two other historical stories, his books made from other material than these romantic and cherished associations are comparatively worthless. In 1823 he published "The Pioneers," the first of the "Leather Stocking" series, in which the scenery of his early

Sources of Inspiration

home is described with a fullness and fondness that somewhat injure it as a story. He wrote it "to please himself," he says; but the public received it with unbounded enthusiasm. Thackeray pronounced "Leather Stocking" to be "the great prize-man of fiction." Equal success the next year attended "The Pilot," through which Cooper became the creator of the sea novel, a department of fiction in which he has had hosts of imitators, but hardly an equal, and no superior. The leading figure of this novel he drew from the famous Revolutionary hero, John Paul Jones. This was followed by "Lionel Lincoln," dealing with New England life and scenes at the opening of the Revolution, and "The Last of the Mohicans," one of his Indian masterpieces.

In 1826 he went to Europe, where he resided seven years, mainly in France and Italy. During this period he wrote "The Prairie," the most poetical of the "Leather Stocking" tales, "Red Rover," the finest of the sea tales, "Wept of Wish-ton-Wish," a story of the New Englanders' struggles with the Indians, and "The Water Witch"; also "The Bravo," a story of Venice, and two other stories of little value, dealing with European politics and exalting the virtues of democracy, and a book entitled "Notions of the Americans," intended to combat the ignorance and prejudice concerning this country, which everywhere, especially in England, offended his sensitive Americanism. This patriotic

Foreign Residence

attempt succeeded, however, only in making enemies for the author on both sides of the water.

Cooper now divided the honors of American authorship with Washington Irving. His books sold in numbers that would be astonishing even to-day with a vastly increased reading public. They were published simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic, and translated immediately into all the cultivated languages of Europe. Of all the books of other American authors only "Uncle Tom's Cabin" ever reached so wide a celebrity. His plots were dramatized for the stage and his scenes put upon canvas by the painters. No author, except Sir Walter Scott, approached him in popularity. In 1833 Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, wrote: "In every city of Europe that I visited, the works of Cooper were conspicuously placed in the windows of every bookshop. They are published as soon as he produces them in thirty-four different places in Europe. They have been seen by American travelers in the languages of Turkey and Persia, in Constantinople, in Egypt, at Jerusalem, at Ispahan."

Popularity

Soon after his return to America he settled in his old home, "Otsego Hall," where he spent the remainder of his life. Several volumes of European travel now appeared, and the valuable "History of the United States Navy," and "Lives of Distinguished American Naval Officers." His productive energy was marvelous; in all, he wrote nearly one

Productivity

hundred volumes. Between 1840 and 1850 he produced seventeen works of fiction, the best of which are "The Deerslayer" and "The Pathfinder," two of the finest products of his genius. These completed the series of "Leather Stocking" tales. Of the other novels of this period the most noteworthy are "The Two Admirals," a story of the British navy in the colonial period, "Mercedes of Castile," in which the story of Columbus is worked over with indifferent success, "Wyandotte," a dull tale of the Revolution, and two interesting stories dealing with early New York history, "The Chainbearer" and "Satanstoe." All that he wrote after the appearance of these books added nothing to his fame as an author, but he continued to pour forth fiction with unabated zeal until the last year of life.

For many years Cooper was involved in a bitter controversy with the press, the history of which must always remain a disgraceful stain upon the fame of American journalism. In a series of satirical novels, particularly "Homeward Bound" and "Home as Found," he attempted to improve the manners of his countrymen, whose general crudeness was an unpleasant contrast to the grace, culture, and dignity of the Old World. There was much truth in what he said, but much offense in the manner of saying it; he lacked the humor necessary to make his instruction palatable. Critics resented his satire, impugned his motives, and basely assailed his character. As fearless a fighter as any of his heroes, he

Controversy with the Critics

carried on the contest single-handed, through innumerable libel suits, to final triumph. But it was a barren victory, merely proving him to be the best hater and most thoroughly hated man of letters in America. Personally, Cooper was a man of generous and sincere nature, moved by the loftiest moral virtues, and in private life enjoying the devoted affection of family and friends. He loved justice, nobility of life, and personal independence, and more than all he loved his country; his patriotism was not a sentiment, but a passion. But he was a man of tenacious prejudices, exceedingly sensitive to criticism, fiery in temper, and implacable in his wrath when aroused against vilifiers and slanderers. "We like him," says Nichol, "as we like Savage Landor, because he was free and fierce and strong." More happily Bryant says, "His character was like the bark of the cinnamon, a rough and astringent rind without, and an intense sweetness within."

Cooper's highest distinction as an original author is found in the "Leather Stocking" tales, which he well called "a drama in five acts." Arranged according to the development of the main character, the successive acts of this forest drama are "The Deerslayer," "The Last of the Mohicans," "The Pathfinder," "The Pioneers," and "The Prairie." The success with which the adventurous career of the hero, Natty Bumppo, or Leather Stocking, is unfolded from youth to old age, with unflagging interest through five novels, is a triumph of imaginative

The Forest Tales

creation. "Leather Stocking is one of the few original characters," says Lounsbury, "perhaps the only great original character that American fiction has added to the literature of the world." He is genuine, representative, and national; he belongs to the soil, like the buffalo, and like the buffalo, is the type of an extinct species, known familiarly only to the pioneer stages of our civilization. The portrait is not without flaws. The pedantic verbosity of the author sometimes gets mixed with Natty's picturesque native speech; but generally there is little to disturb the reader's delight in the companionship of this child of nature, with his aboriginal simplicity, natural piety, homely humor, and astonishing skill in woodcraft.

To Cooper belongs the credit of adding the sea to the domain of imaginative literature. Captain Marryat, Clark Russell, and the many other clever spinners of sea yarns, all learned their lessons from him. He wrote "The Pilot" to show how much more nautical truth a real sailor could give to a story than Scott had given to "The Pirate," and the breezes still blow fresh through the sails of the *Ariel*. Even superior to "The Pilot," as a story, is "The Red Rover," a tale of buccaneer adventure, after which come "Wing-and-Wing," "The Two Admirals," "The Water Witch," and "Afloat and Ashore," of inferior merit, though not without the genuine flavor of the sea. His sea tales are saturated with salt spray, as the forest tales are filled with the redolence

The Sea Tales

of hemlock and spruce. In the fullness of nautical lore, in the vivid picturing of swift-flying vessels, battling with tempestuous waves, or grappling with a desperate enemy, in the powerful presentation of all the wild and romantic phases of ocean life in the early days, Cooper shows an easy mastery.

In the field of historical romance, into which he was naturally led by his ardent patriotism, Cooper achieved but one prominent success. The hero of "The Spy," the versatile peddler, Harvey Birch, who served the army of Washington when quartered near New York, as an original creation is a fit companion for Long Tom Coffin and Natty Bumppo.

Historical Tales

The interest of the other Revolutionary and colonial stories is mainly confined to descriptions of manners and customs, and to narrative episodes. "Lionel Lincoln," for example, is valuable only for the account of the fights at Concord and Bunker Hill, which Bancroft once declared to be the best description of those scenes ever written. Cooper's genius developed its full strength when in the company of men in deerskin and tarpaulin; his weaknesses were all brought forth by contact with ordinary society. The temptation to lecture his fellow-men, and chastise his enemies, betrayed him away from the true path of the story-teller.

His faults as a writer are many and palpable enough. He moralizes too much, his social and religious prejudices are too prominent, his conversations are stilted

and unreal, his introductions are often tediously long, his female characters are generally blushing and fainting creatures, without vitality or human interest, and his polite gentlemen are men of wood, and sapless wood at that. There is no true sentiment or passion. The inevitable love story trailing through the narrative is generally senseless and absurd. But his faults are easily forgotten and forgiven in his best works. His power is in the description of exciting adventures; his scenes of action are alive with vivid reality. His enthusiasm for the woods is irresistible. With Hawk-eye, Uncas, and Chingachgook, he brings the reader into living comradeship. He is called the "American Scott," for with Scott he shares some of the highest qualities of the perfect story-teller. As Scott's true field was the romance of history, Cooper's field was the romance of wild nature. "In Leather Stocking," says Richardson, "Cooper created, developed, and completed one of the most natural and significant and attractive characters in the fiction of all lands." His Indians, although conscientious studies from the life, are undoubtedly idealizations; but they have been permanently accepted the world over, and whatever may be the contradiction of facts, will remain the Indians of literature.

Literary Faults and Merits

Of the rhetorical qualities of his work, Lounsbury says: "He rarely attained to beauty of style. The rapidity with which he wrote forbids the idea that he

ever strove earnestly for it. Even the essential but minor grace of clearness is sometimes denied him. He had not, in truth, the instincts of the born literary artist. Satisfied with producing the main effect, he was apt to be careless in the consistent working out of details. Plot, in any genuine sense of the word 'plot,' is to be found in very few of his stories. He seems rarely to have planned all the events beforehand; or, if he did, anything was likely to divert him from his original intention. The incidents often appear to have been suggested as the tale was in process of composition. Hence the constant presence of incongruities with the frequent result of bringing about a bungling and incomplete development."

It is now often thought to be a mark of critical wisdom to disparage Cooper's novels, and to class them among juveniles. Such judgment, however, is indicative of a narrow sense of literary values. If the critics of his own generation, in the stimulating rush of his novel narratives, were sometimes too lib-

Permanent Position

eral in their estimates of his genius, it is nevertheless certain that Cooper holds a permanent place of dignity and honor. Of this place his careful biographer says: "Cooper is one of the people's novelists, as opposed to the novelists of highly cultivated men. This does not imply that he has not been, and is not still, a favorite with many of the latter. The names of those, indeed, who have expressed excessive admiration for his writings far sur-

pass in reputation and even critical ability those who have spoken of him depreciatingly. Still the general statement is true that it is with the masses he has found favor chiefly. The sale of his books has known no abatement since his death."

Reading and Discussion. — The Spy; The Deerslayer; The Pathfinder, or The Last of the Mohicans; The Pilot, or The Red Rover.

Biography and Criticism. — Lounsbury's "James Fenimore Cooper" (American Men of Letters). Clymer's "James Fenimore Cooper" (Beacon Biographies). Bryant's "Orations and Addresses." Wilson's "Bryant and his Friends." Richardson's "American Literature," Vol. II, chap. 9. Nichol's "American Literature." *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1887. Susan Fenimore Cooper's Introductions to the "Leather-Stocking Tales" and "Sea Tales." Parton's "Life of Horace Greeley," chap. 18. Matthews's "Americanisms and Briticisms." Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Mark Twain's "How to Tell a Story, and other Essays." Wendell's "Literary History of America."

NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS

1806-1867

Nathaniel Parker Willis, for many years the most popular magazine writer in America, was born in Portland, in 1806, the year before Longfellow was born in the same city. He was educated at Yale College, and began his career as a journalist in Boston, where his father established the first religious paper, the *Boston Recorder*, and the first children's paper, the

Youth's Companion. While in college he became widely known through his poems on scriptural subjects.

Willis's early work belongs to the period of the elegantly sentimental "Annuals," when no parlor table was complete without its "Gems" and "Albums" with "embellishments," "Thought Blossoms," "Forget-me-Nots," "Tokens," and "Friendship's Offerings."

Age of "Annuals"

The craze for this "gemmiferous" literature, represented in England by Mrs. Norton and "L. E. L.," and in America by James Gates Percival and Mrs. Sigourney, continued for some twenty years. To these gilt-edged collections of prose and verse Willis was a favorite contributor. Indeed, much of his poetry, says his biographer, "was album-verse, with an air of the boudoir and ball-room about it, a silvery elegance and an exotic perfume, that smack of that very sentimental and artificial school."

He spent several years in Europe, enjoyed unparalleled popularity with people of eminence in all classes, and recorded his experiences in a delightful series of sketches, "Pencillings by the Way," first sent as weekly letters to the *New York Mirror*, and in other collections, as "Inklings of Adventure" and "Loiterings of Travel." The "Pencillings" were extravagantly praised, and attained to a peculiar celebrity, owing to the unreserve with which the author gossiped about distinguished people. In 1836 he returned with an English wife, and settled at "Glen-

mary," Owego, N. Y., where he wrote the charming rural sketches, "Letters from under a Bridge." His more celebrated home was "Idlewild," near Cornwall-on-the-Hudson. His nearest approach to a professional position was that of joint editor with Morris of the *Home Journal*, for which he wrote indefatigably during the last years of his life.

Willis was something of a fop both in his manners and in his writings, for which, however, he has been too severely censured. He wrote merely to please, cleverly and often brilliantly, and always with a sunny and healthful optimism. In his best essays and stories there is a stimulating effervescence of style so sparkling and delicious that one does not notice the tenuity of thought. Indeed, his instinct for style was an important formative influence in our literature in the period when Cooper's indifferent English was assailing the public taste. His work was ephemeral, but some of it is too valuable a contribution to refined enjoyment to be lost. As Lowell said: — Literary Qualities

'Tis not deep as a river, but who'd have it deep?

His easy, exuberant expression was the result of painstaking care, as shown by his manuscripts, filled with erasures and emendations. His English, says Beers, "had many excellent qualities. It was crisp, clean cut, pointed, nimble on the turn. He was good at a quotation, deftly brought in, unhackneyed, and

never too much of it, a single phrase or sentence or half a line of verse may be. There is a perpetual twinkle or ripple over his style, like a quaver in music, which sometimes fatigues. Is the man never going to forget himself and say a thing plainly? the reader asks. But the verbal prettinesses and affectations which disfigured his later prose do not abound in his earlier and better work. He had at all times, however, a feminine fondness for italics and exclamations, and his figures had a daintiness which displeased severe critics. Thus: 'The gold of the sunset had glided up the dark pine-tops and disappeared, like a ring taken slowly from an Ethiop's finger.' 'As much salt as could be tied up in the cup of a large water-lily,' is an instance of his superfine way of putting things. He likened Daniel Webster's forehead, among the heads at a Jenny Lind concert, to 'a massive magnolia blossom, too heavy for the breeze to stir, splendid and silent amid fluttering poplar leaves.'" Although euphuistic writing of this kind is not permitted by the severer taste of the present age, the sternest critic may enjoy it without endangering his self-respect.

Class Reading. — *Poems:* The Belfry Pigeon; To a City Pigeon; To M —— from Abroad; Spring; Unseen Spirits; Love in a Cottage; The Annoyer; The Sacrifice of Abraham; Absalom.

Prose: Letters from under a Bridge; A Dinner at Lady Blessington's; A Breakfast with Charles Lamb; A Week at Gordon Castle, from Pencillings by the Way.

Biography and Criticism.—Beers's "Nathaniel Parker Willis" (American Men of Letters) and "Prose Writings of N. P. Willis." Richardson's "American Literature." Poe's "Literati." Whipple's "Essays and Reviews," Vol. I. Lowell's "Fable for Critics."

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

National Expansion.—Schouler's "History of the United States," Vol. IV. McMaster's "History of the People of the United States," Vol. IV, chap. 33; Vol. V, chaps. 45, 47. Drake's "Making of the Great West." Roosevelt's "Winning of the West," Vol. IV, chap. 7. Goodrich's "Recollections of a Lifetime." Flint's "Recollections." Gay's "James Monroe" (American Statesmen). Royce's "California"; King's "Ohio"; Barrows's "Oregon" (American Commonwealths). Benton's "Thirty Years' View." Sparks's "Pioneer Life in the Ohio Valley." Powell's "Historic Towns of the Western States." "History of the Expedition under Lewis and Clarke," edited by Coues. Brooks's "First Across the Continent." Halsey's "Old New York Frontier." Warman's "Story of the Railroad" (Story of the West Series). Cairns's "On the Development of American Literature from 1815–1833."

Illustrative Literature.—Irving's "Captain Bonneville" and "A Tour on the Prairies." Cooper's "Prairie." Mrs. Kirkland's "Forest Life" and "Western Clearings." Bird's "Nick of the Woods." Paulding's "Westward Ho!" Parkman's "Oregon Trail." Thorpe's "Hive of the Bee Hunter." Eggleston's "Circuit Rider" and "The Graysons." Bret Harte's "Outcasts of Poker Flat" and "A Ship of '49." Mark Twain's "Roughing It" and "Life on the Mississippi." Longfellow's "Poems of Places—Western States." Kirkland's "Zury." Dye's "McLoughlin and Old Oregon."

New York.—Roberts's "New York" (American Commonwealths), Vol. II, chap. 34. Roosevelt's "New York," chaps. 12, 13. Mrs. Lamb's "History of New York." Janvier's "In Old New York." "The Knickerbocker Gallery," 1855.

CHAPTER IV

TRANSCENDENTALISM

THE most important influence in the development of American literature was the intellectual and spiritual awakening in New England known as the Transcendental Movement. Transcendentalism was a vagrant impulse started in Germany, and passed on through England to America by Coleridge and Carlyle; by Emerson and his followers it was localized and embodied in forms of creative effort; its altars were set up in Concord, a quiet Massachusetts village, which for more than half a century has been the home and resort of poets and philosophers; from this center radiated influences that have been productive of the finest fruits of American genius. Emerson and his associates were so closely related by a kinship of ideas that the group might with propriety be called the Concord School.

The Transcendental Movement

The movement passed through many phases. It began with the reaction against orthodox Calvinism, which, under the leadership of Dr. Channing, resulted in Unitarianism. From Unitarianism it broadened rapidly into the Transcendentalism of Emerson and

the liberal Christianity of Theodore Parker. It developed various schemes of social reform, the most notable of which was the Brook Farm experiment, directed by George Ripley, with whom Hawthorne, George William Curtis, and other choice spirits, were associated, in an attempt at plain living and high thinking, based on the communal principle. The movement may be said to have culminated in the anti-slavery agitation and the Civil War.

The fundamental characteristics of the movement were idealism, liberalism, independence, and reform. It was a protest against slavery in every form — physical, mental, and spiritual. Dogma and authority were renounced, and the rights of private consciousness asserted. Man should "plant himself indomitably on his instincts," declared Emerson. About 1836 a number of young people, says Higginson, "discovered that it was possible to take a look at the stars for themselves." These young people were members of the "Transcendental Club," among whom were Emerson, Ripley, Channing, Alcott, Parker, James Freeman Clarke, Elizabeth Peabody, Margaret Fuller, and others, who with ardent minds were giving color to a new dawn in New England thought. They were united, however, only in the one respect of enthusiasm for broader and better thinking and living. Goethe and German philosophy were studied and discussed; Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," which Emerson republished, was a powerful leaven. In 1840 the

Fundamental Ideas

Dial was started, a periodical, edited by Margaret Fuller and later by Emerson, which for four years was the special organ of the Transcendental writers.

The era of "new views" naturally produced its excesses of unballasted enthusiasm, and became temporarily prolific of absurd isms and fantastic reforms. Every new theory was seized upon with the hope of some important revelation. Mesmerism had its adepts, and hydropathy, and phrenology. Fourierism had its converts. Chimerical projects for social regeneration were discussed in "conventions." "Communities were established," says Lowell, "where everything was to be common but common sense." Alcott renounced meat, and preached what Carlyle called his "potato gospel." Graham would have no bolted flour. "One apostle," says Emerson, "thought all men should go to farming; and another that no man should buy or sell, that the use of money was the cardinal evil; another that the mischief was in our diet, that we eat and drink damnation. Others assailed particular vocations, as that of the lawyer, that of the merchant, of the manufacturer, of the clergyman, of the scholar." But along with "this din of opinion and debate," he adds, "there was a keener scrutiny of institutions and domestic life than any we had known; there was sincere protesting against existing evils, and there were changes of employment dictated by conscience. No doubt there was plentiful vaporing, and excess of backsliding might occur But

Reform Excesses

in each of these movements emerged a good result, a tendency to the adoption of simpler methods, and an assertion of the sufficiency of the private man." [1]

Opinions called "Unitarian" began to be current about 1815, and for many years a heated controversy was maintained between the orthodox and the radical Congregationalists. William Ellery Channing, who had received his first religious instruction from Samuel Hopkins, in Newport, became the leader of the radicals, and first gave to the body consciousness and the courage of its convictions. His sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks, in Baltimore, in 1819, was regarded as "a solemn impeachment of Calvinistic theology." He asserted the dignity of human nature, which he believed to be degraded by the doctrines of Calvinism, maintained the rights of human reason, and exalted the function of the individual conscience.

William Ellery Channing, 1780–1842

We must start in religion from our own souls. In these is the fountain of all divine truth. An outward revelation is only possible and intelligible on the ground of conceptions and principles previously furnished by the soul. Here is our primitive teacher and light. There are, indeed, philosophical schools of the present day who tell us that we are to start in all our speculations from the Absolute, the Infinite. But we rise to these conceptions from the contemplation of our own nature. . . . The only God whom our thoughts can rest on, and our hearts can cling to, and our consciences can recognize, is the God whose image dwells in our own souls.

1 "The New England Reformers."

Here we find the individualism and the self-centered spiritual authority of Emerson's teaching. Comparing this passage with Jonathan Edwards's denunciation of human nature, as the "predestinate" object of the Almighty's "everlasting wrath," one can perceive, as in no other way so well, the depth and significance of the change that was taking place in New England thinking.

An intense love of freedom was fundamental to all of Channing's preaching and writing, which made him an opponent of slavery as well as of Calvinism. "We were made for free action. This alone is life, and enters into all that is good and great." Boston still treasures as a precious inheritance the memory of his devout presence, lofty spirituality, and eloquent, persuasive preaching. "It was not oratory," says James Freeman Clarke, "it was not rhetoric; it was pure soul, uttering itself in thoughts clear and strong as the current of a mighty stream."

Unitarianism was not only an expansive, revolutionary force in theology, but a stimulating, energizing force in literature, acting, in this direction, in unison with the more radical transcendental thought. Channing's writings were largely controversial, but his essays on the "Life and Character of Napoleon Bonaparte" and "The Character and Writings of John Milton" were contributions to permanent literature. They mark an era in American prose; no critical work had before appeared so elaborate in form, so

excellent in style, and so rich in knowledge. "The intrinsic merit of his writings," says Richardson, "which are broad in range, earnest in tone, graceful in style, and at times highly eloquent, is considerable. It is not usual for a theologian to be read half a century after death, and such has been Channing's good fortune. Yet it would be too much to call him one of the first American authors, if we limit the adjective to writers of the grade of Emerson, Hawthorne, Lowell, Longfellow, or Bryant. His work was valuable, because it was both a sign of, and an influence toward, that indigenous culture which America was beginning to show. If America, between 1820 and 1840, with all her intellectual crudities and follies, was displaying something of the academic spirit and work, and some foretaste of 'sweetness,' some dawn of 'light,' she owed the boon, in considerable measure, to the fact that Channing lived and wrote."

Channing's Literary Influence

Closely allied to the Transcendentalists, and a "heresiarch" among the Unitarians, was Theodore Parker, Boston's most remarkable preacher after Channing. He began preaching at West Roxbury in 1837, where he enjoyed intercourse with the eager intellects of Brook Farm, and later became the pastor of an independent congregation in Boston. He was an omnivorous reader and prodigious worker, and his voluminous and volcanic eloquence was used with telling effect in his incessant

Theodore Parker, 1810-1860

labor as preacher, lyceum lecturer, and anti-slavery agitator. "He had no grace of person," writes his biographer, "no charm of expression, no music of voice, no power of gesture; his clear, steady, penetrating blue eye was concealed by glasses. Still, notwithstanding these disadvantages, his intensity of conviction, his mass of knowledge, his warmth and breadth of feeling, his picturesqueness of language, his frankness of avowal, fascinated young and old." His belief, so far as it was more than a faith in freedom, knowledge, and spiritual enlightenment, was "theism based upon transcendental principles." Pushing the liberalism of Channing to its logical but unexpected extreme, he became the leader of the radical wing of the church since known as "Parkerite Unitarians." Of his works, collected in fourteen volumes, "Historic Americans," and "Lessons from the World of Matter and the World of Man," have the most permanent interest.

Between the conservative and radical Unitarians stood James Freeman Clarke, a popular Boston minister, widely known by his "Common Sense in Religion," "Ten Great Religions," and other books of a similar character. He was the friend of all literary men and literary movements, and while holding essentially to the religious position of Channing, was able to sympathize with the most advanced thinkers among the Transcendentalists. The progress from Channing's

James Freeman Clarke, 1810–1888

Unitarianism to Transcendentalism and Parker's radicalism, and thence to modern rationalism, was a natural expansion of the right of free thought. The logical tendency of Protestantism is toward individualism. On the spiritual side both Channing and Emerson were the legitimate descendants of Jonathan Edwards. The "sweetness" of spiritual perfection which Edwards dared to claim only for the "elect" the Transcendentalists claimed for all men.

The preaching of Channing was supplemented by the criticism of Andrews Norton (1786–1853), an accomplished Biblical scholar at Cambridge, who exposed the weaknesses of the arguments of Calvinism and its errors of scriptural interpretation. "Channing delighted," says Whipple, "to portray the felicities of a heavenly frame of mind; Norton delighted to exhibit the felicities of accurate exegesis. Both were masters of style; but Channing used his rhetoric to prove that the doctrines of Calvinism were abhorrent to the God-given moral nature of man; Norton employed his somewhat dry and bleak but singularly lucid powers of statement, exposition, and logic to show that his opponents were deficient in scholarship and sophistical in argumentation." The new theology was propagated in New York by Orville Dewey (1794–1882), who was once associated with Channing as assistant minister; a man of fertile mind, with a deeply reverent sense of the dignity of human life and its ideal beauty, still known in his thoughtful lectures on "The Problem of Human Destiny." A long step toward rationalism was taken by John Gorham Palfrey (1796–1881), Professor of Biblical Literature at Harvard, better known as the historian of New England, who, in his "Academical Lectures on the Jewish Scriptures," explained most of the miracles of the Old Testament on natural principles.

Unitarian Propagandists

Among the stanch defenders of Calvinism against the Unitarian heresy were the Andover professors, Moses Stuart (1780–1852), who, taking the hint from his adversaries, introduced to Americans the German scholars whose works would count on the side of orthodoxy; and Leonard Woods (1774–1854), whose glory it is, according to a later divine, to have "educated more than a thousand preachers who had neither crotchets nor airy aims." The leading champion of the Trinitarians for many years was Lyman Beecher (1775–1863), father of Henry Ward Beecher, who was called from a sixteen years' pastorate in Litchfield, Connecticut, to a pulpit in Boston, that he might be face to face, as it were, with the enemy. These men were strong preachers and hard fighters, and their many volumes of orthodox exposition and argument form a memorial of the great conflict that commands less and less of the interest of succeeding generations.

Defenders of Calvinism

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

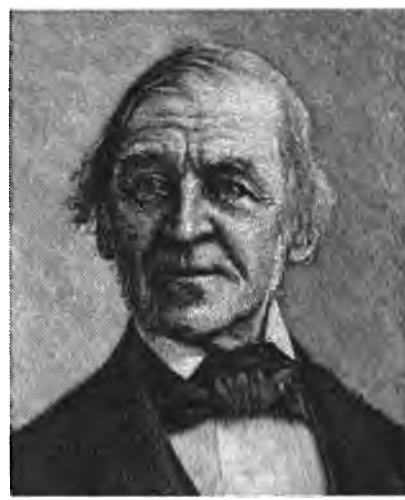
1803–1882

"Socrates or Plato, if suddenly brought to life again in America, might have spoken like Emerson, and the effect produced by Emerson was certainly like that produced by Socrates in olden times." So writes Max Müller, in his recollections of literary friendships[1]; and similarly others have sought to summarize the peculiar energizing results of Emerson's work by bestowing upon him such appellations as "The Buddha of the West," "The Yankee Plato," and "The Intellectual Emancipator of America."

[1] "Auld Lang Syne," 1st series, p. 172.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Boston, May 15, 1803, "within a kite-string's distance" from the birthplace of Franklin. He was educated at the Boston Latin School and Harvard College, where he was graduated in 1821. He delivered a poem at his commencement and received a second prize for English composition, but was not distinguished for scholarship, and seems to have given little evidence of the powers within him. His classmate, Josiah Quincy, describes him as "quiet, unobtrusive, and only a fair scholar according to the standard of the college authorities." On leaving college he engaged in teaching. One of his pupils remembers him as "very grave, quiet, and very impressive in his appearance. There was something engaging, almost fascinating, about him; he was never harsh or severe, always perfectly self-controlled, never punished except

Education



Ralph Waldo Emerson

with words, but exercised complete command over the boys."

The descendant of eight generations of clergymen, Emerson was led into the ministry, as it were, by force of inheritance. He was ordained as a Unitarian preacher in Boston in 1829, but doubts and scruples arising in his mind about administering the communion, he resigned his pastorate in 1832, and soon afterward abandoned preaching altogether. His sermons appear to have been singularly attractive. Many recall their beauty of language, earnestness, and "an indefinite charm of simplicity and wisdom." In 1833 he went abroad, traveled in Italy and France, met Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Landor, and visited Carlyle in his wild Scotch home at Craigenputtock, forming an acquaintance that led to a remarkable correspondence extending over thirty-six years. Mrs. Carlyle said years afterward, that he came like one "out of the clouds" into their desert, "and made one day there look like enchantment for us"; and Carlyle thought him "one of the most lovable creatures they had ever looked on." The next year he settled in Concord, living at first in the village parsonage, afterward Hawthorne's "Old Manse." He now began his career as a lecturer, and for many consecutive years delivered courses of lectures, out of which were formed, by a slow process of condensation and selection, his final "Essays." In 1835 his second marriage occurred, his first wife having died in 1832.

Preacher and Lecturer

Emerson published anonymously in 1836 his first important essay, "Nature," a kind of prose poem, so strange in language and thought that few comprehended it, or suspected it to be the harbinger of an intellectual revolution. In April of the same year, for the celebration at the raising of a monument to commemorate

The "Old Manse" at Concord

the Concord fight, he wrote the fine "Concord Hymn," containing the memorable lines: —

> Here once the embattled farmers stood,
> And fired the shot heard round the world.

In 1837 the celebrated Phi Beta Kappa oration, "The American Scholar," was delivered at Harvard, a discourse that marks an epoch in American thinking and

writing. It was an event, says Lowell, "without any former parallel in our literary annals, a scene to be always treasured in the memory for its picturesqueness and its inspiration. What crowded and breathless aisles, what windows clustering with eager heads, what enthusiasm of approval, what grim silence of foregone dissent!" The address was a plea for generous culture, the study of nature and books and men, for purposes of mental and spiritual exaltation, in contrast with the absorbing pursuit of material gain into which Americans were plunging; also for an independent, self-respecting culture. "We have listened too long," he says, "to the courtly muses of Europe. The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame." It was "our intellectual Declaration of Independence," says Holmes. "Young men went out from it as if a prophet had been proclaiming to them 'Thus saith the Lord.'" This plea for culture as the corrective of materializing tendencies was again made in 1841 in the address entitled "The Method of Nature," and his words have still a burning pertinency in their application to American life.

The Intellectual Revolution

We hear too much of the results of machinery, commerce, and the useful arts. We are a puny and fickle folk. Avarice, hesitation, and following are our diseases. The rapid wealth which hundreds in the community acquire in trade, or by the incessant expansion of our population and arts, enchants the eyes of all the rest; this luck of one is the hope of thousands, and the bribe acts like the neighborhood of a gold mine to

impoverish the farm, the school, the church, the house, and the very body and feature of man. . . . While the multitude of men degrade each other, and give currency to desponding doctrines, the scholar must be a bringer of hope, and must reënforce man against himself.

These early addresses and the essay "Nature" were the inspiring sources of the transcendental literature; henceforth Emerson was a leader and seer. Truly did Carlyle write, "You are a new era, my man, in your huge country." The new doctrines aroused conservative astonishment and led to controversies; but in these Emerson took no part himself, defining his office to be, "Seeing whatever I can, and telling what I see." He would be only a revealer of truth, not its defender. "Like a rose tree in June, which blossoms sweetly whether the air be chilly or sunny, his thought quietly flowered into exquisite expression. You might like it or leave it. But the rose would be still a rose."[1]

A great sorrow came to Emerson, in 1842, in the death of his first-born son, whose memory is enshrined in the beautiful and pathetic "Threnody," a poem which, in the opinion of Holmes, "has the dignity of 'Lycidas' without its refrigerating classicism, and with all the tenderness of Cowper's lines on the receipt of his mother's picture." In 1847 he reluctantly yielded to the wishes of his friends in England, that he should

Sorrow; Lectures in England

[1] George William Curtis's "Other Essays from the Easy Chair," p. 104.

be heard there as a lecturer, and delivered in Edinburgh, Manchester, and other cities, the lectures with which we are now familiar as "Representative Men." It was during this visit that George Eliot met him and wrote to a friend: "I have seen Emerson — the first *man* I have ever seen." A literary result of this visit was the popular volume called "English Traits."

Emerson's saying that "great geniuses have the shortest biographies" applies to himself. He lived calmly apart from the seething activities of the world; his commerce was with the skies, whence he brought aid and consolation to men. His life flowed placidly on like the quiet river that flowed by his home, pure, transparent, and radiant with sunshine. The first volume of his collected "Essays" appeared in 1841, containing some of his most cherished work, as the essays on "History," "Self-Reliance," "Compensation," "Love," "Friendship," and "Heroism."

A Life of Few Events

A "Second Series" of essays appeared in 1844, to which were added "The Conduct of Life," 1860, "Society and Solitude," 1870, and "Letters and Social Aims," 1876. The term "essays" might appropriately be the title of all his works, for his method is essentially the same in each volume. Even the poems are often but rhythmic expressions of ideas in the essays. In 1871 he visited California, and the following year made his third trip to Europe. His final home-coming was made memorable by the enthusiastic welcome of his loving townspeople; from the

railway station he was "escorted with music between two rows of smiling school children to his house, where a triumphal arch of leaves and flowers had been erected." He was honored, in 1874, with the nomination for the office of Lord Rector of Glasgow University, and received five hundred votes against seven hundred for his competitor, Lord Beaconsfield. In twilight beauty his old age sank peacefully away to death, which came April 27, 1882.

Emerson's personality was refined, gracious, and noble. "There was a majesty about him," says Lowell, "beyond all other men I have known, and he habitually dwelt in that ampler and diviner air to which most of us, if ever, only rise in spurts." Says Hawthorne: "It was good to meet him in the wood-paths or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure intellectual gleam diffused about his presence like the garment of a shining one; and he so quiet, so simple, so without pretension, encountering each man alive as if expecting to receive more than he could impart." And he adds, "It was impossible to dwell in his vicinity without inhaling more or less the mountain atmosphere of his lofty thought." He was a philosopher among farmers, and the Concord farmers honored and loved him, though they did not understand him. He was faithful to social and civic duties, kind and courteous to visitors, infinitely patient even with the inquisitive stranger. "His friends were all who knew him"; even "babes in arms returned his angelic

Personality

smile." Yet his life was led apart from men; it was a life "hidden in the light of thought." He often spiced his philosophy with the shrewd Yankee sense, but he lacked the Yankee aptitude for practical affairs. After vain trials with the hoe and pruning knife, he turned his gardening over to Thoreau. His little son, seeing him awkwardly working with a spade, cried out, "Take care, papa, you'll dig your leg;" and he once humorously said of his manual dexterity that he could "split a shingle four ways with one nail." His purse was never filled. A new stove for the kitchen depended upon the success of a season's lecturing. With the mere business of living he could not seriously concern himself. His business was with the stars.

The philosophy of Emerson is Idealism, applied to practical life; its highest truths come through the intuitions, not through the "half sight of science." In its expression he is sometimes carried in lofty rhapsodies to the verge of mysticism, as in "Nature," "The Over-Soul," and the poem "Brahma"; but generally his thought is well anchored in common sense, and he everywhere gives inspiring and illuminating evidence of the possibilities of life on a higher level. He is the mystic and the man of sense united, as suggested in Holmes's happy comparison:—

Emerson's Philosophy

> Where in the realm of thought, whose air is song,
> Does he, the Buddha of the West, belong?
> He seems a winged Franklin, sweetly wise,
> Born to unlock the secrets of the skies.

His constant theme is the omnipresence of God. Soul permeates all things. "The world is saturated with deity." His mental attitude is optimistic, always that of trust and faith. "My whole philosophy," he says, "which is very real, teaches acquiescence and optimism." His influence is that of an inspirer, giving a spiritual lift to all who reach out to him. Individualism and self-reliance are fundamental to his theory of life. "Insist on yourself; never imitate." He is not afraid of inconsistency. "With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do," he says. "Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day." He at times seems distant and cold; the light of his thought is astral rather than solar; but if the heart is not always warmed, the soul is purified and exalted. He formulates no system of philosophy; he asserts, but does not argue; and stimulates in others independent and original thought. "He was the great liberalizer," says Curtis. His thought entered into the mental consciousness of New England and cleared away its acerbity; tempered the harsh theological atmosphere that enveloped it, and brought forth the sweet flowers and fruitage of Longfellow, Lowell, and Whittier. New England without Concord and Emerson would be like Greece without Athens and Plato. Of the final value of his work Matthew Arnold says: "As Wordsworth's poetry is in my judgment the most important

work done in verse in our language during the present century, so Emerson's 'Essays' are, I think, the most important work done in prose." And this estimate is well supplemented by Henry James's explanation of the fundamental and abiding power of his work: "There have been many spiritual voices appealing, consoling, reassuring, exhorting, or even denouncing and terrifying, but none has had just that firmness and just that purity. It penetrates farther, it seems to go back to the roots of our feelings, to where conduct and manhood begin; and, moreover, to us to-day, there is something in it that says that it is connected somehow with the virtue of the world, has wrought and achieved, lived in thousands of minds, produced a mass of character and life."

Emerson's essays are mosaics of precious thoughts, arranged without definite design, and held together by the cohesiveness of spirit rather than of logic. He confesses to a "lapidary style. I build my house of bowlders." Carlyle complained that his paragraph is not "a beaten ingot," but "a beautiful square bag of duckshot held together by canvas." He made endless notebooks, and from these would sift the substance of a lecture or an essay. His thought ran naturally into crisp, laconic sayings, associated, rather than correlated, with a central theme. Thickly strewn everywhere upon his pages are aphoristic sentences like these:—

Prose Style

Hitch your wagon to a star.
Character teaches above our wills.
Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue.
Every man's task is his life-preserver.
A great man is always willing to be little.
Nature is loved by what is best in us.
God builds his temple in the heart on the ruins of churches and religions.
Men are like Geneva watches with crystal faces which expose the whole movement.
Truth is the summit of being; justice is the application of it to affairs.
Prudence is the virtue of the senses. It is the science of appearances. It is the outmost action of the inward life. It is God taking thought for oxen.

"Emerson's style," says Holmes, "is epigrammatic, incisive, authoritative, sometimes quaint, never obscure, except when he is handling nebulous subjects. His paragraphs are full of brittle sentences that break apart and are independent units, like the fragments of a coral colony. His fertility of illustrative imagery is very great. His images are noble, or, if borrowed from humble objects, ennobled by his handling. He throws his royal robe over a milking stool and it becomes a throne." "His eye for a fine, telling phrase," says Lowell, "that will carry true, is like that of a backwoodsman for a rifle; and he will dredge you up a choice word from the mud of Cotton Mather himself. A diction at once so rich and so homely as his, I know not where to match in these days of writing by the page; it is like homespun cloth-of-gold."

In respect to Emerson as a poet, critical opinion is widely varied, according as emphasis is placed on the form or on the substance, in defining the essentials of poetry. He possessed the vision but not the "faculty divine," and his poetic limitations can be frankly admitted without detriment to his worth or fame. The feeling and the exaltation of the poet were his distinctive qualities; much of his prose is poetry in the rough; but his poetic expression was imperfect; he lacked skill in managing the technique of verse. His ear was defective, betraying him frequently into halting and struggling rhythms, and rhymes that are sometimes cases of "actual verbicide." And yet he often triumphed supremely over his defects. Verse seemed to have a special attraction for him when he wished to embody some particularly fine or exalted thought, and so one finds everywhere in his poems beautiful and noble passages, "happy and golden lines, snatches of grace," which illustrate his own principle, that "great thoughts insure musical expression." He has a way of astonishing the reader into admiration by sudden flashes of light and beauty and power. Stedman confesses that at times he thinks him "the first of our lyric poets, his turns are so wild and unexpected;" and an English critic generously remarks: "If Emerson had been frequently sustained at the heights he was capable of reaching, he would unquestionably have been one of the sovereign poets of the world. At its very best,

Poetic Limitations

his phrase is so new and so magical, includes in its easy felicity such a wealth of fresh suggestion, and flashes with such a multitude of side lights, that we cannot suppose that it will ever be superseded, or will lose its charm." [1]

His fine phrasing of striking and detached thoughts in crisp epigrammatic form is not equaled by other American poets. His favorite octosyllabic verse, which runs so easily into crudeness and commonplace when overworked, is well suited to this condensed form of expression. The "Problem" is almost a succession of these pregnant sayings: — Poetic Style

> Out from the heart of nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old.
>
> One accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world hath never lost.

Compare also the familiar lines of the "Rhodora" —

> if eyes were made for seeing,
> Then beauty is its own excuse for being,

and the exquisite imagery with which the "Concord Ode" opens —

> O tenderly the haughty day
> Fills his blue urn with fire.

The poetic limitations of Emerson are felt in the substance of his verse almost as much as in the form. It is lacking in human warmth and fellowship. Ex-

[1] Edmund Gosse's "Questions at Issue," p. 87.

cept in the deep tones of the "Threnody" and in the patriotic poems, there is little of passion or emotion, little of joy or pain. All is calm, philosophic, sublime. Such poetry moves the intellect, but does not melt into the heart. Its atmosphere is clear and frosty, and like a winter landscape it affects one with a sense of isolation. The poet himself is a vague, intangible figure; somewhere beyond the reader's ken he sits alone gazing at the stars. Only when in contact with nature does he seem to reach out familiarly to his fellow-beings. A humblebee almost persuades him to be humorous. He worships nature, but not like Keats, or Shelley, or even the philosophic Wordsworth. He hears no music in the fields like that of the "Solitary Reaper," whose voice is an echo of

Passionless Poetry

> Old, unhappy, far-off things
> And battles long ago.

But it is almost an impertinence to discuss the limits of a genius that expressed itself chiefly and best in scorn of rules and formulas. Emerson's poetry is original and genuine, its message to the soul is authentic, and it does not matter that in total value it is surpassed by his prose. The touch of divinity is upon it, and that is enough, if we can but feel and see that it is there. The singularity of his poetic greatness is strikingly presented by John Burroughs, whose spirit is to the spirit of Emerson something more than kin: "Not in the poetry of

any of his contemporaries is there such a burden of the mystery of things, or such round wind-harp tones, lines so tense and resonant, and blown upon by a breeze from the highest heaven of thought. In certain respects he has gone beyond any other. He has gone beyond the symbol to the thing signified. He has emptied poetic forms of their meaning, and made poetry of that. He would fain cut the world up into stars to shine in the intellectual firmament. He is more and he is less than the best. He stands among other poets like a pine tree amid a forest of oak and maple. He seems to belong to another race, and to other climes and conditions. He is great in one direction — up; no dancing leaves, but rapt needles; never abandonment, never a tossing and careering, never an avalanche of emotion; the same in sun and snow, scattering his cones, and with night and obscurity amid his branches." [1]

Class Study. — *Essays:* The American Scholar; Compensation; Self-Reliance; Friendship.

Poems: The Problem; The Rhodora; The Humblebee; The Snowstorm; Woodnotes; Threnody; Concord Hymn; Fable; The Apology; Good-Bye.

Class Reading. — *Essays:* Character; History; Success; Shakspere.

Poems: Each and All; May Day; The Titmouse; Sea Shore; Days; Musketaquid; The Sphinx; Two Rivers; Boston Hymn.

Biography and Criticism. — Cabot's "Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson." Holmes's "Ralph Waldo Emerson"

[1] John Burroughs's "Birds and Poets," p. 199.

(American Men of Letters). Garnett's "Ralph Waldo Emerson" (Great Writers). Conway's "Emerson at Home and Abroad." E. W. Emerson's "Emerson in Concord." Norton's "Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson." Mrs. Fields's "Authors and Friends." Woodbury's "Talks with Ralph Waldo Emerson." Alcott's "Concord Days." Whipple's "Recollections of Eminent Men." Ireland's "In Memoriam: Emerson." Lowell's "Emerson the Lecturer" and "Thoreau" (Prose Works, Vol. I) and "Fable for Critics." Curtis's "Literary and Social Essays." Matthew Arnold's "Discourses in America." Morley's "Ralph Waldo Emerson: an Essay." Chapman's "Emerson and Other Essays." Birrell's "Obiter Dicta," 2d series. Burroughs's "Indoor Studies" and "Birds and Poets." Henry James's "Partial Portraits." Scudder's "Men and Letters." Cooke's "Emerson: his Life, Writings, and Philosophy." Johnson's "Three Englishmen and Three Americans." Grimm's "Literature." Sanborn's "Genius and Character of Emerson." Richardson's "American Literature," Vol. I, chap. 9; Vol. II, chap. 5. Whipple's "American Literature." Alcott's "Ralph Waldo Emerson: an Estimate of his Character and Genius." Higginson's "Contemporaries." Julian Hawthorne's "Confessions and Criticisms." Frothingham's "Transcendentalism in New England," chap 9. Welsh's "Development of English Literature." Forster's "Four Great Teachers." Hunt's "Studies in Literature and Style." Santayana's "Poetry and Religion." Garnett's "Essays of an Ex-Librarian."

Poets' Tributes. — Hayne's "To Emerson on his Seventy-seventh Birthday." Stedman's "Corda Concordia." Alcott's "Ion: a Monody." Emma Lazarus's "To R. W. E." Susan Coolidge's "Concord." Sanborn's "The Poet's Countersign." Lucy Larcom's "R. W. E." Stoddard's "At Concord." Matthew Arnold's "Written in Emerson's Essays." Cranch's "Ralph Waldo Emerson."

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1817–1862

Henry David Thoreau, "the poet naturalist," was born in Concord, in 1817, and there lived his strange life to the end. As indicated by his name, his remote ancestry was French, but he was himself a thoroughbred Yankee. He was graduated from Harvard in 1837, without distinction as a scholar, but became proficient in Greek, and in later life made a translation of the "Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus. He taught a short time, then took up pencil-making, his father's trade, and when he had succeeded in making a better pencil than was then in use, surprised his friends by declaring his intention never to make another pencil: "Why should I? I would not do again what I have done once." The way to fortune thus opened had no attractions for him. Reading and the study of wild life were the only occupations that satisfied him, and for these he renounced the world, preferring to the society of men "that glorious society called Solitude." He chose, says Emerson, "to be the bachelor of thought and Nature."

Education and Inclinations

About six weeks of paid labor in the year Thoreau found to be enough to supply his simple wants. He was a skillful carpenter, gardener, and land surveyor, and the neighboring farmers learned to respect the

eccentric recluse as they found his knowledge of their fields to be far superior to their own. He lectured frequently at the Concord Athenæum, and occasionally elsewhere. The little world of his native town was all-sufficient for him, and he seldom left it to explore the great world. "The sight of a marsh hawk in Concord meadows," he says, "is worth more to me than the entry of the Allies into Paris." Concord River was as interesting as the Mississippi or the Amazon. His first published volume, "A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers," describes an excursion made with his brother in a boat of his own building. Excursions to the forests of Maine and Canada and to the salt marshes of Cape Cod yielded materials for the volumes entitled "Maine Woods," "A Yankee in Canada," and "Cape Cod." In 1845 he built with his own hands a cabin on the shore of Walden pond, a mile south of the village, and his two years' life in this hermitage is described in the most popular and most charming of his books, "Walden; or Life in the Woods." The site of the cabin is now marked by a cairn of stones gathered from the neighboring fields, to which each devoted pilgrim adds a stone.

His Field of Study

In an early college essay Thoreau commends the practice of "keeping a private journal or record of our thoughts, feelings, studies, and daily experience." Such a journal he himself kept, from 1837 until his death, which is comprised in thirty manuscript vol-

umes, and from which material for several posthumous volumes has been obtained. He could seldom be induced to interrupt his studies to address the public. Besides an occasional essay or poem he published only two works during his lifetime, the "Week," and "Walden." Of the first nearly the whole edition was sent back to him by the publisher unsold. "I have now," he says, "a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself." He was indifferent to fame, and did not need public interest or private sympathy to encourage him in his work.

Literary Habits

He had few friendships; animals and Indians were more companionable than cultivated men, because nearer the heart of Nature. His master and chief friend was Emerson, the cast of whose thought is on all he wrote. Although apparently without human sympathy, he was one of the first to speak fearlessly in behalf of the slaves. He was as obstinately independent in his actions and convictions as Nature herself. Opposition stimulated him, and toughened the fiber of his nature, as the wind strengthens a tree. He says, "I love to go through a patch of scrub oaks in a bee-line, where you tear your clothes and put your eyes out." He enjoys storms, is "glad to be drenched" in a cold rain; "it gives a tone to my system." He has the palate of an out-door man and relishes "the sours and bitters of nature," and so genuine is his enjoyment that readers

Personal Qualities

are bound to share his enthusiasms. Indeed, when reading his essay on "Wild Apples," one feels that it would be easy to forego peaches and oranges forever.

The true value of Thoreau's writings has been discovered only in recent years. The secret of his power is in a sympathetic and minute knowledge of Nature, suffused with ideality. He was a naturalist, but not a scientist. He would never use trap or gun; like Hawthorne's Donatello he possessed a kind of mysterious kinship with the animal world. The hunted fox came to him for shelter, squirrels nestled in his clothing, and though men found him cold and disagreeable, children delighted in his company. All living objects seemed to yield their secrets to him as his right. He had the poet's sensitiveness to every sound and scene of beauty, and at times could express his feeling in well-turned verse. Occasionally, as in the poem "Smoke," he shows a classic felicity of expression as exquisite as the Greek. But his poetry was happily judged by Emerson: "The thyme and marjoram are not yet honey." Although his prose is filled with the substance of poetry, his mind was too untamable to submit to the restraints of verse. His general qualities were well summarized by himself: "The truth is I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot."

Nearness to Nature

Of Thoreau as a writer Lowell says: "His range was narrow, but to be a master is to be a master. He

had caught his English at its living source, among the poets and prose writers of its best days; his literature was extensive and recondite; his quotations are always nuggets of the purest ore; there are sentences of his as perfect as anything in the language, and thoughts as clearly crystallized; his metaphors and images are always fresh from the soil; he had watched Nature like a detective who is to go upon the stand; as we read him it seems as if all-out-of-doors had kept a diary and become its own Montaigne; we look at the landscape as in a Claude Lorraine glass; compared with his, all other books of similar aim, even White's 'Selborne,' seem dry as a country clergyman's meteorological journal in an old almanac." And yet to many he can be a trifle dull; he observes minutely, his sight is microscopic, and he records details endlessly, and the aim of it all is indefinite. "He took nature as the mountain-path to an ideal world. If the path wind a good deal, if he record too faithfully every trip over a root, if he botanize somewhat wearisomely, he gives us now and then superb outlooks from some jutting crag, and brings us out at last into an illimitable ether, where the breathing is not difficult for those who have any true touch of the climbing spirit."

Lowell's Criticism

Class Study. — *Excursions:* The Succession of Forest Trees; Wild Apples; A Winter Walk.

Class Reading. — *Excursions*: Walking; Autumnal Tints; Night and Moonlight; *Walden; Early Spring in Massachusetts.*

Biography and Criticism. — Sanborn's "Thoreau" (American Men of Letters). Page's "Thoreau, his Life and Aims." Emerson's "Biographical Sketch" (Introduction to "Walden"). Channing's "Thoreau, the Poet Naturalist." Salt's "Life of Henry David Thoreau." Lowell's Prose Works, Vol. I. Burroughs's "Indoor Studies." Stevenson's "Familiar Studies of Men and Books." Louisa M. Alcott's "Thoreau's Flute." Emerson's "Woodnotes."

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

1804–1864

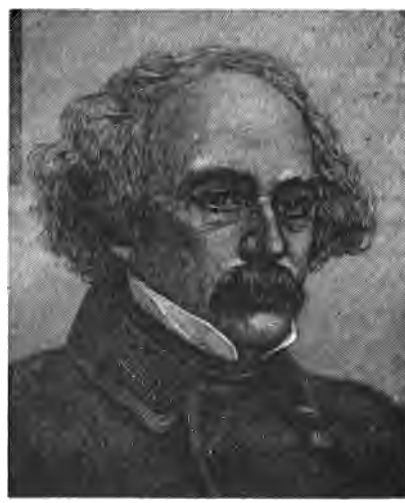
With the Transcendentalists, but not of them, was Nathaniel Hawthorne, the greatest romancer and the finest imaginative artist in American literature. He was born July 4, 1804, in witch-haunted Salem. His ancestors for many generations were celebrated for their stern and vigorous qualities; one persecuted the Quakers, and another condemned witches; his grandfather was the "Bold Hawthorne" of the Revolutionary ballad; his father was also a sea captain, and died in South America in 1808. Unlike these sturdy ancestors as was Hawthorne, the gentle dreamer, yet "strong traits of their nature," he says, "have intertwined themselves with mine."

Ancestry

When fourteen years old he went with his widowed mother to Raymond, Maine, where for a year he lived "like a bird of the air, so perfect was the freedom I enjoyed." He loved to wander in the forest and skate until midnight all alone on Sebago lake, "with the

deep shadows of the icy hills on either hand." Here, he declared in after years, "I first got my cursed habit of solitude." He studied under Dr. Worcester, the author of the dictionary, and was graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825. Longfellow was his classmate and Franklin Pierce and Horatio Bridge were his most intimate college friends. His mates called him "Oberon," for from early youth he possessed a strikingly fine physique, strong, erect, with grandly molded head and large dark eyes, brilliant and beautiful with expression. Charles Reade said that he had never seen such eyes in a human head. He did not distinguish himself as a scholar, though "a hearty devourer of books," following the bent of his own fancies, or with his friend Bridge "gathering blueberries in study hours under those tall academic pines, or watching the great logs as they tumbled along the

Education



Nathaniel Hawthorne

current of the Androscoggin, or shooting pigeons and gray squirrels in the woods," in short, "a hundred things the faculty never heard of." But he formed strong friendships with Bunyan, Spenser, Shakspere, and other great English authors, and soon after graduation published "Fanshawe," a story of college life, which he afterwards suppressed when a better disciplined taste discovered its crudeness.

For twelve years after leaving college, Hawthorne lived a stranger in his own town and a recluse in his own home, indulging to the full his relish for solitude. He was seldom seen in the daytime, but would wander alone at night along the haunted streets of the old town, or up and down the moonlit seashore. In his silent chamber he studied and meditated, and wrote and burned his rejected manuscripts and wrote again. It was a period of rigid self-discipline, during which the fine qualities of his genius were wrought into shape for the production of exquisite works of art. "Here I sat a long, long time, waiting patiently for the world to know me." Some of his stories had appeared in the magazines and annuals of the day, and in 1837 he gathered these firstlings of his imagination into a volume felicitously entitled "Twice-told Tales." They were generously praised by Longfellow in the *North American Review*, and Poe, the self-constituted literary dictator of the period, grudgingly acknowledged their power and foretold the author's high fame. He was not much longer to be,

Discipline of Solitude

what he had once called himself, "the obscurest man of letters in America."

He had attracted the friendly interest of Bancroft, the historian, and through him received an appointment in the Boston Custom House; but the measuring of coal he found to be "a very grievous thraldom," from which he escaped in two years. He spent the next year with the Brook Farm community, hoping to find in this experiment with modified communism, in which "nobler loves and nobler cares" were to prevail, favorable conditions for a comfortable, if not an ideal home; for he was now preparing for the most important event of his life, his marriage to Sophia Peabody, whom his son-in-law, Lathrop, describes as "a woman of the most exquisite natural cultivation conceivable." Transcendental farming proved to be an expensive delusion, and in 1842 he left this visionary Arcady, married, and settled in the "Old Manse," the ancient parsonage of Concord. Here three years were "devoted to literature and happiness." In this "Eden" grew "The Mosses from an Old Manse," the introduction to which is a most charming chapter of autobiography, a piece of idyllic writing that Curtis thinks to be "perhaps the most softly hued and exquisite work of his pen."

Brook Farm and Marriage

Publishers paid slowly and meagerly in those days, and the happy couple tasted "some of the inconveniences of poverty." Having a wholesome dread of the wolf at the door, Hawthorne accepted the position of

custom house surveyor in Salem. Through a change of administration at Washington, he lost this position in 1849, and returned to productive literary work. It is noteworthy that Hawthorne wrote nothing during his various periods of official service, except elaborate notebooks and journals. His delicately organized genius would not create under the restraint of official duty; it required long intervals of uninterrupted meditation. He now worked strenuously at the romance that had been slowly taking shape in his mind during the custom house idleness, and in 1850 "The Scarlet Letter" was published. Success was immediate and enthusiastic, and his reputation was established. America had finally produced an imaginative work of the highest order, and one that in pith and substance was truly American.

Government Service

The three years from 1850 to 1853 were Hawthorne's most prolific period. He lived for a time in Lenox, among the Berkshires, in "the ugliest little old red farmhouse you ever saw," and there wrote "The House of Seven Gables" and the "Wonder Book." In 1852 he returned to Concord to establish his home at the "Wayside," a pleasant old house looking out upon the road along which the British soldiers made their inglorious march. The same year appeared the "Blithedale Romance," "the lightest, the brightest, the liveliest" of his fictions. Upon the election of Pierce to the presidency, he was sent

as consul to Liverpool. Seven years were spent abroad, the last part of the period in Italy. At Florence he occupied a retired villa overlooking the city, "with a moss-grown tower haunted by the ghost of a monk who was confined there in the thirteenth century. I mean to take it away bodily and clap it into a romance which I have in my head." The romantic villa soon appeared in "The Marble Faun," which was published in 1860, the year in which he returned to America. Settled again at the "Wayside," he entered upon several literary projects, but completed only one more book, "Our Old Home," made from his English notes and recollections. The Civil War was a source of great depression, to which his creative powers yielded; and his physical health strangely and steadily declined. Two novels were begun, "Septimus Felton" and "The Dolliver Romance." The opening chapter of the latter had been given to the printer, and readers of the *Atlantic* were eagerly awaiting the promised romance, when he wrote sadly to his publisher: "I know pretty well what the case will be. I shall never finish it." A few weeks later he attempted a trip to the White Mountains with his devoted friend, Franklin Pierce, and died suddenly at Plymouth, May 18, 1864.

Foreign Residence

The life of Hawthorne was singularly pure and beautiful, and it was a happy life, although to the outer world it seemed austere, morbid, and melancholy. He had the sensitive, thoughtful, brooding

temperament of Hamlet, easily impressed and burdened by the jarring of sin in the world. A natural tendency to shyness and silence was increased by his early habits of study and by the unsocial life of his family. "A cloudy veil stretches across the abyss of my nature. I have, however, no love of secrecy and darkness." Indeed, according to his friend Fields, though the humorous side of his nature was not often discernible, he could be "marvelously moved to fun." He loved children devotedly, entering sympathetically into their lives, and wrote stories for them that have been classic from the day of their publication. "He was a man of rare courtesy and kindliness in personal intercourse," says Curtis, "mostly silent in society, and speaking always with an appearance of effort, but with a lambent light of delicate humor playing over all he said."

Personal Qualities

The art of a supreme artist like Hawthorne baffles attempts at analysis. His perfect workmanship leaves no tool marks by which to trace its processes. Some things are obvious, yet without the definiteness that attaches to the qualities of ordinary authors. It is clear that his mind works most naturally in the region of the ideal and spiritual, yet he is as minute an observer as any realist of the Balzac cult. His imagination is like "tricksy Ariel," pure, delicate, sensitive, yearning for the freedom of the upper air, while bound to earth to serve mankind. This fine balancing of the ideal and real is a conspicu-

Artistic Qualities

ous part of his genius. His thought runs most readily into symbolism, allegory, apologue, but the form is never stiff and mechanical. His artistic taste is perfect. It keeps his work always within the bounds of the beautiful; there is no offense of extravagance and vulgarity, no questionable sensationalism. It selects language of Saxon strength, without Saxon coarseness. Without affectation or weakness it mingles with prose the grace and rhythm of poetry. It permits him to preach, without revealing the preacher. It restrains his imagination at the borderland of wholesome imagery; Hawthorne never enters the "ghoul-haunted woodlands of Weir," where Poe's imagination loved to dwell. His delightful fancies "never leave a stain upon the imagination," says Leslie Stephen, "and generally succeed in throwing a harmonious coloring upon some objects in which we had previously failed to recognize the beautiful." Fields is right in saying that his writings "never soiled the public mind with one unlovely image."

A graceful and charming style would seem to have been a part of Hawthorne's natural endowment, yet he once said that it was merely "the result of a great deal of practice." Slightly self-conscious in the early tales, it becomes in the larger works rich, free, and spontaneous, transmitting the most delicate shades of thought and feeling with marvelous precision. It is as clear and beautiful as the water of a mountain brook filled with sunshine.

Style

Pervading it, too, like the odor of flowers, is a quiet, evasive humor; and here and there the odor is pungent, the humor is sharpened to a satiric edge. In the sketch of "The Custom House," intended as a relief to the gloom of "The Scarlet Letter," the happy play of airy and piquant humor suggested to Curtis "the warbling of bobolinks before a thunderstorm."

Hawthorne's theme, the problem of sin, was an inheritance from his ancestors. He had no spiritual sympathy with puritanism, but his interest was dominated by it; his imagination was held captive by the New England conscience. "The unwilling poet of puritanism," Lowell calls him. It is a favorite method with critics, when accounting for the limited product of American genius in the highest forms of literature, to magnify the uninspiring elements of American life and scenery. The imagination, it is said, cannot thrive where everything is in sharp outline, glaringly new and obtrusive, where there is no picturesqueness, no historic atmosphere, no distant background of legend and romance. Hawthorne himself complained of the difficulty of making literature out of "commonplace prosperity in broad and simple daylight." That he was deceived in respect to his environment is shown by the manner in which he transformed this intractable material into fictions of incomparable beauty and imperishable interest. By the magic touch of his fancy he invested the hard New England history with a glamour of

Burden of his Thought

mystery as romantic as ever rested upon ivy-mantled ruins of the Old World. For this reason his stories are romances, rather than novels. He cares less for plot and action, and more for atmosphere, feeling, and the silent unveiling of souls.

The early writings, contained in "Twice-told Tales" and "Mosses from an Old Manse," are of three classes. There are allegorical fantasies, like "Young Goodman Brown" and "Rappaccini's Daughter." Some of these are spun out of the daintiest material of pure fancy, as "The Snow Image" and "The Great Carbuncle." Next are the historical tales, "myths and mysteries of old Massachusetts," such as "The Maypole of Merry Mount," "The Gray Champion," and the "Legends of the Province House." And finally, the graceful little sketches of real scenes, as "A Rill from the Town Pump," "Main Street," "The Village Uncle," and "The Toll-Gatherer's Day." In this early work we find all of Hawthorne's distinctive qualities of style and theme; "the quiet ease is there, the pellucid language, the haunting quality." But the finish of perfection was yet to be added. The best criticism of these tales is that of Hawthorne himself: "They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade." There is not enough real flesh and blood in them. Their natural beauty is often like that of caverns as revealed for a moment by the glare of the explorer's torch.

The Early Tales

"The Scarlet Letter" is generally regarded as Hawthorne's masterpiece. In its clear insight into the elemental passions of human nature, in its power to lay bare the deepest recesses of the heart and soul, it is supreme. The analysis is as minute as an experiment in psychology. The abiding, hopeless, burning retribution of sin is its theme. The interest is enthralling, the gloom is tragic. The flaming letter that symbolizes Hester Prynne's shame brands itself upon the reader's consciousness almost as relentlessly as upon the guilty breast of Arthur Dimmesdale. "The soul-struggles of four human beings, against the background of stern righteousness and witch-superstition, are painted in hues of purple and black, with rays of nature's sunshine and childish innocence stealing across." In "The House of Seven Gables" the blighting effects of hereditary sin are presented. Of the four great romances, this is the most popular, and is nearest like the novel of manners. The scene of the story is old Salem. Although its atmosphere is filled with autumnal haze, there is cheer and brightness in it, variety and breadth of human interest, delicious humor and strong characterization. Henry James is inclined to think that it is "the closest approach we are likely to have to the great work of fiction so often called for, that is to do us nationally most honor and most good."[1] "The Blithedale Romance" is a

The Great Romances

[1] "Library of the World's Best Literature."

splendid memorial of the Brook Farm experiment. With an imagination free from the restraint of any historic intent, Hawthorne describes the life of the reformers as he saw it and judged it during his own unsatisfactory experience among them. It is full of fresh New World life and scenery, often idyllic in the grace and beauty of its outdoor pictures. The interest centers in the beautiful and brilliant Zenobia, a superb creation, and Hawthorne's finest woman character. The richest of the romances in descriptive beauty is "The Marble Faun," which has for background the majesty of Rome. The imperial city with its decaying splendor exercised a powerful fascination upon Hawthorne, which, by the wonderful witchery of his pen, he in turn communicates to his readers. Interwoven with beautiful descriptions of art and nature, a slender thread of narrative sustains the moral purpose of the book. Hawthorne here treats the problem of evil in its broadest and profoundest aspect, seeking an explanation of the existence and purpose of sin through the unfolding of its mysterious transforming power. Donatello is a symbolic expression of the evolution of a human soul.

Hawthorne's rank as an author is among those few whose right it is to stand above all planes of comparison. In Lowell's judgment he possessed "the rarest creative imagination of the century, the rarest in some ideal respects since Shakspere." Says Bayard Taylor: "In all the higher literary qualities, in all that

constitutes creative genius, he is indisputably the first. He found his own field of labor, like Cooper, but is entitled to higher honors as a discoverer, inasmuch as that field was loftier and more remote. His style is no less limpid than that of Irving, and is the more attractive, in so far as it betrays the proportions of no model and the manner of no former period. He is at once the rarest and purest growth of the intellectual and social soil from which he sprang. He is not only American, but no other race or time could possibly have produced him."[1]

Critical Estimates

Of his peculiar power Leslie Stephen says: "No modern writer has the same skill in so using the marvelous as to interest without unduly exciting our credulity. He makes, indeed, no positive demands on our credulity. The strange influences which are suggested rather than obtruded upon us are kept in the background, so as not to invite, nor indeed to render possible the application of scientific tests. He catches dim glimpses of the laws which bring out strange harmonies, but on the whole, tend rather to deepen than to clear the mysteries. He loves the marvelous, not in the vulgar sense of the word, but as a symbol of the perplexity which encounters every thoughtful man in his journey through life." Hutton says of his literary method: "His characters are real and definitely outlined, but they are all seen in a single light — the contemplative light of the particu-

[1] "Essays and Notes," p. 354.

lar idea which has floated before him in each of his stories — and they are seen, not fully and in their integrity, as things are seen by daylight, but like things touched by moonlight — only so far as they are lighted up by the idea of the story. The thread of unity which connects his tales is always some pervading thought of his own; they are not written mainly to display character, still less for the mere narrative interest, but for the illustration they cast on some idea or conviction of their author's. His novels are not novels in the ordinary sense; they are ideal situations expanded by minute study and trains of clear, pale thought into the dimensions of novels."

Class Study. — *Twice-told Tales:* The Gray Champion; A Rill from the Town Pump; The Great Carbuncle; Dr. Heidegger's Experiment; The Village Uncle; Snowflakes; The Threefold Destiny.

Snow Image and Other Twice-told Tales: The Snow Image; The Great Stone Face; Main Street; Little Daffydowndilly.

Mosses from an Old Manse: The Old Manse; Rappaccini's Daughter; Birds and Bird-Voices; Young Goodman Brown.

Class Discussion. — The House of Seven Gables, or The Marble Faun.

Biography and Criticism. — Julian Hawthorne's "Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife." Lathrop's "Study of Hawthorne." Rose Hawthorne Lathrop's "Memories of Hawthorne." Bridge's "Recollections of Hawthorne." Henry James's "Nathaniel Hawthorne" (English Men of Letters). Conway's "Nathaniel Hawthorne" (Great Writers) and "Emerson at Home and Abroad," chap. 24. Mrs. Fields's "Nathaniel Hawthorne" (Beacon Biographies). Fields's "Yesterdays with

Authors." Howe's "American Bookmen." Curtis's "Literary and Social Essays" and "From the Easy Chair," 3d series. Leslie Stephen's "Hours in a Library," 1st series. Hutton's "Literary Essays." Johnson's "Three Englishmen and Three Americans." Gates's "Studies and Appreciations." Higginson's "Short Studies of American Authors." Whipple's "Character and Characteristic Men," and "American Literature." Richardson's "American Literature," Vol. II. Nichol's "American Literature." Howells's "Literary Heroines," Vol. I. Poe's "Literati." Welsh's "Development of English Literature."

Poets' Tributes. — Lowell's "Fable for Critics" and "Agassiz." Longfellow's "Hawthorne." Stedman's "Hawthorne." Gilder's "Hawthorne in Berkshire."

Among the Transcendentalists must be numbered the gifted woman, Margaret Fuller, who has generally been regarded as the original of Hawthorne's "Zenobia" in the "Blithedale Romance," and whose name has maintained a prominence disproportionate to the value of her books. She was one of the first to establish the right of women to stand intellectually with men. She edited the *Dial*, the organ of Transcendentalism, gave brilliant "conversation" lectures in Boston, and entered actively into the reform movements of the period, — temperance, antislavery, and higher education for women. In 1846 she went to Italy, aided Mazzini in his revolution, and married the Marquis Ossoli. When returning she was drowned with her husband and child within sight of her native land. The books written about this remarkable woman are now more interesting than her own writings (Lives by Higginson and Mrs. Howe), although her "Woman in the Nineteenth Century" is a valuable landmark in the history of woman's progress. She furnished some of the intellectual yeast of the period, the effects of which were seen in the works of others rather than in her own.

Margaret Fuller, 1810–1850

The most visionary and mystical of the Concord group was Amos Bronson Alcott, whose "Orphic Sayings" proved too

difficult sometimes for the comprehension even of the elect. He conducted a school in Boston on the peculiar principle of vicarious punishment, renounced animal food, worked in the field to prove the dignity of labor, and lived in a singularly exalted way the pure life of the soul. His "Tablets," "Concord Days," and "Sonnets and Canzonets" contain what wisdom and beauty he had to bequeath to his fellow-men. His chief influence, as Higginson suggests, was "atmospheric," an emanation from his benign face and pure life. It was this influence that gave a kind of spiritual potency to his last achievement, the Concord School of Philosophy.

Amos Bronson Alcott, 1799–1888

Alcott was not unlike Chaucer's Clerk:—

> But al be that he was a philosophre,
> Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,

and his search for the infinite proved to be a frequent embarrassment to his family in respect to finite things. The task of keeping the balance adjusted between the practical and the ideal fell to the talented daughter Louisa. At seventeen her struggle began; she tried teaching, sewing, going out to service, and writing stories for the newspapers. Her first book, "Flower Fables," was written at sixteen for the children of Emerson and her own sisters. A year of service as army nurse resulted in "Hospital Sketches." After years of discouraging toil her success was established with "Little Women" and its sequel "Little Men." These and other juvenile tales founded on her own family life, made her the most popular writer for children in her generation. Her style is careless and commonplace, but there is a charm of freshness, naturalness, humor, clear-sighted sympathy with healthy boys and girls, and a wholesome gospel of work and simple living, that win the young, and compel the old to become young again.

Louisa May Alcott, 1832–1888

Among the minor poets affected by the Concord influence was Jones Very (1813–1880), "a sort of Unitarian monk and mystic," whose "Essays and Poems," first published in 1839,

contains a series of sonnets remarkable for their clear spirituality and delicate conception, expressing "the serene, sure beauty of churchyard lilies." Among the Brook-Farmers was Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–1892), whose "Poems," "Translation of the Æneid," and "Ariel and Caliban," still hold his name in honor. The readers of the *Dial* looked for great things from William Ellery Channing (1818–1901), a nephew of the great divine, in whom Emerson was much interested, and whose verses Carlyle pronounced "worthy indeed of reading." Associated with this group by the serious import of her work was Helen Hunt Jackson ("H. H.") (1831–1885), whose poetry "unquestionably takes rank," says Higginson, "above that of any other American woman, and its only rival would be found, curiously enough, in that of her early schoolmate, Emily Dickinson." She is better known, however, by her "Bits of Travel" and other similar fragmentary descriptions and reflective essays in little, and by "A Century of Dishonor" and the powerful novel "Ramona" (1884), written in the white heat of indignation at the wrongs of the Indian. Another belated Transcendentalist was Edward Roland Sill (1841–1887), a scholar and idealist, whose two little volumes of verse contain a philosophy, expressed often with great beauty, that asserts the triumph of spirit over flesh with a confidence that, in a period of eager materialism, is stimulating and helpful.

Minor Transcendental Poets

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Frothingham's "Boston Unitarianism," "History of New England Transcendentalism," and "Life of George Ripley." John Thomas Codman's "Brook Farm; Historic and Personal Memoirs." Emerson's "New England Reformers" and "The Transcendentalist." Louisa M. Alcott's "Transcendental Wild Oats" (Silver Pitchers). Bradford's "Reminiscences of Brook Farm" (*Century*, November, 1892). W. H. Channing's "Memoirs of William Ellery Channing." Higginson's "Life of

Margaret Fuller" (American Men of Letters). Hawthorne's "American Note Books." Channing's "Works," Vol. III ("Unitarian Christianity"). Nichol's "American Literature," chap. 8. Swift's "Brook Farm; Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors." Frank Preston Stearns's "Sketches from Concord and Appledore." Winsor's "Memorial History of Boston," Vol. III. Wendell's "Literary History of America," Bk. V. Higginson's "Cheerful Yesterdays" and "Contemporaries." Chadwick's "Theodore Parker, Preacher and Reformer." Caroline W. Healey's "Margaret and her Friends." Cheney's "Louisa M. Alcott: Her Life, Letters, and Journals." Julia Ward Howe's "Life of Margaret Fuller." Lowell's "Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing." Whittier's "Channing."

CHAPTER V

THE ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENT

LITERATURE springs up naturally along the highways of great national movements. Much of such literature possesses only a transient interest, and is swept away with the dust and refuse left by the procession of events; but some of it has a permanent vitality, because it embodies in artistic form principles and passions of permanent and universal interest. During the period from 1830 to 1865 two movements affecting our national life, merging finally into one and culminating in the Civil War, produced their own interpretative literary records.

The Constitution was hardly established before the long contest began over its provisions respecting the liberties of the states. Patrick Henry had sounded the "state rights" alarm, and the spirit of disaffection was spread through the South by the brilliant, eccentric, half-mad John Randolph, who prepared the way for John C. Calhoun, author and mighty defender of the South Carolina doctrine of "Nullification." At the North the party supporting the authority of the Constitution and the integrity of the Union was under the divided leader-

Nullification and Abolition

ship of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. The great question at issue was whether the Constitution established a union or a confederacy, a centralized government or a league of sovereign states. Underlying the whole controversy, and disturbing the conscience as well as the reason of both parties, was the hateful question of slavery. To make war directly upon this institution, the abolition movement was inaugurated by William Lloyd Garrison, who, in 1831, began publishing the *Liberator* in Boston with the memorable challenge that startled the conservative self-interest and prejudice of the whole nation, "I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice," and "I will be heard."

Forensic debate, however brilliant and impressive politically, seldom produces literature. The dry light of the reason cannot alone give lasting vitality to rhetorical art; the intellect must be touched and tempered by emotion, and the thought must be illuminated by the imagination. Of all the masterly eloquence poured forth in Congress during a period of forty years, hardly any literary evidence remains except the few great speeches of Webster. The keen, logical arguments of Calhoun, and the magnetic, persuasive speeches of Clay, are all lost in the common oblivion of Congressional "documents." The powerful personality of these remarkable leaders was not transferred to their words. Webster alone had the genius so to clothe his arguments with

Politics and Literature

thought and sentiment, and lift them from the arid plain of political controversy into the realm of art as to endow them with immortality. On the other hand, the substance of the abolition movement was an ardent, devoted sentiment of reform, sustained by moral ideals and a desperate intensity of purpose that led the participants to every extreme of obloquy, poverty, self-sacrifice, and martyrdom. While the cause of the Constitution was making magnificent debaters, the cause of slavery was making impassioned orators and poets.

The period represented by Webster may be called the third period of American eloquence. In some respects the public speaking of this period was superior to that of the Revolutionary epoch. The best orations were more elaborate, artistic, and learned, successfully simulating the grace and dignity of classical oratory. They were generally carefully written and corrected before delivery and publication. But the broader tendency was toward a shallow, bombastic style, the boastful "spread-eagle" style of Fourth-of-July occasions, and of "the member from Buncombe County." Says Bryce: "Public taste, which was high in the days after the Revolution, when it was formed and controlled by a small number of educated men, began to degenerate in the first half of this century. Despite the influence of several orators of the first rank, incessant stump speaking and the inordinate vanity

Oratory of the Webster Period

of the average audience brought a florid or inflated style into fashion, which became an easy mark for European satire."[1]

Formal oratory in America practically came to an end with the Civil War. Formerly the people looked to the orator and statesman for instruction and guidance in respect to public affairs, but these functions are now usurped by the ubiquitous newspaper. Public speaking assumes more and more the character of a popular entertainment, of which instruction is only an incidental feature.

The orators of this period may be classified according to their attitude toward slavery. John Randolph, John C. Calhoun, and Robert Y. Hayne represented the extreme Southern demands. Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, Rufus Choate, and Robert C. Winthrop were moderate opponents of slavery who deprecated the evil and resisted its extension, but refrained from direct attack upon the "institution," lest it should imperil the Constitution and the Union. In opposition to these, the radical, sometimes fanatical, Abolitionists, with their high ideals, hot enthusiasm, and irresistible earnestness, were led by William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner, and Abraham Lincoln. The speeches of nearly all of these illustrious men have literary qualities that are well worth studying, but they have not the literary greatness that is

Three Groups

[1] James Bryce, "The American Commonwealth." Vol. II, p. 652.

necessary to long life. The orations of Webster, however, and two at least of Lincoln's addresses, belong preëminently to both the literary and the political history of America.

DANIEL WEBSTER

1782–1852

Daniel Webster was born on a New Hampshire farm, January 18, 1782. He was a delicate child, and was not put to hard work, but he early showed an insatiable thirst for knowledge, reading everything that came in his way, and committing to memory large portions of what he read. This manifest talent for books determined his father, in spite of meager means, to give him an education; accordingly the boy prepared for Dartmouth College, and was graduated in 1801. At school he was too timid to stand up and "speak

Daniel Webster

pieces" in the usual manner, but revealed his native eloquence among the neighboring farmers, who would listen to his recitations from the Bible and the poets, fascinated by the charms of his deep lustrous eyes, and the already rich and melodious intonations of his voice. Education

At college he attracted attention for his quick perceptions, tenacious memory, and power of clear and convincing statement, qualities that readily secured to him a position of superiority among his fellows. He overcame his diffidence in public speaking, and so general was the recognition of his oratorical powers that the citizens of Hanover invited him to deliver a Fourth-of-July oration. It is remarkable that in this boyish speech are found the essential principles, clearly stated, that governed his life-work as a statesman.

After a brief period of teaching, to help his brother through college, Webster began the study of law; he was admitted to the bar in 1805, and finally settled in Portsmouth, where he rose rapidly in his profession. In 1813 he was sent to Congress, and at the close of his second term he resumed the practice of law, having in the meantime removed his residence to Boston. The celebrated "Dartmouth College Case," which he argued before the Supreme Court at Washington, in 1818, gave him national fame as one of the greatest of constitutional lawyers. The simple language, charged with intense feeling, with which the argument closed, was so effective as to The Lawyer

bring tears to the eyes of Chief Justice Marshall. "It is, sir, as I have said, a small college. And yet there are those who love it." Such words as these, uttered with quivering lips and voice tremulous with emotion, were more powerful than argument.

Webster's reputation as an orator was established by an oration delivered at Plymouth, in 1820, commemorating the two hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. The address was published and received with wide enthusiasm. "It had more literary success," says his biographer, "than anything which had at that time appeared, except from the pen of Washington Irving. The public, without stopping to analyze their own feelings, or the oration itself, recognized at once that a new genius had come before them, a man endowed with the noble gift of eloquence, and capable by the exercise of his talents of moving and inspiring great masses of his fellow-men." The fame obtained from this achievement was increased by the address, in 1825, at the laying of the corner-stone of Bunker Hill monument, and again the next year by the commemorative discourse upon Adams and Jefferson. These orations, with the "Second Bunker Hill Oration," must always be numbered among American classics. The oration upon Adams and Jefferson contains the familiar "supposed" speech of John Adams, beginning, "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote."

The Orator

Webster returned to Congress in 1823, and the rest of his years were spent in the public service. He entered the Senate in 1827 and reached the zenith of his oratorical and political reputation in the remarkable speech, January 26, 1830, known as the "Reply to Hayne." Calhoun, the "great nullifier," was in the vice-president's chair; the elaborate and ingenious system of arguments evolved by his acute mind for severing the Union by constitutional authority was unfolded by his lieutenant, Robert Y. Hayne. Realizing the peril to the Union, arising from the specious doctrine of "state rights," Webster summoned all his splendid powers for a reply and made a triumphant defense of the Constitution, which delayed the inevitable conflict for thirty years. Its closing words, "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable," have ever since served as the rallying cry of patriots. "For genuine oratorical power," says Fiske, "the Reply to Hayne is probably the greatest speech that has been delivered since the oration of Demosthenes on the Crown. . . . Probably no other speech ever made in Congress has found so many readers, or exerted so much influence in giving shape to men's thoughts."

The "Reply to Hayne"

In 1833 Calhoun became senator in Hayne's place, and for seventeen years continued the contest with Webster over the Constitution. Twice Webster was called to the office of secretary of state, and performed the duties of the position with great skill and

credit. There was one more exalted position, the highest honor in the gift of the people, to which he now aspired. Ambition, that "last infirmity of noble minds," the desire to be president, so colored his last years as to detract much from the clear glory of renown with which his countrymen would have crowned him, as the noblest reward for his illustrious services.

The Seventh of March Speech

Statesman though he was, he could not wholly rise above the politician. His last great speech, "On the Constitution and the Union," delivered in the Senate, March 7th, 1850, has generally been regarded as an attempt to conciliate the South by accepting the compromise measures of Clay, including the Fugitive Slave Law, so odious to the North. At the South the speech gained for him not one vote; at the North it was received with astonishment, indignation, and sorrow. He had proved false, so it seemed, to himself, to his friends, and to his country. The terrible denunciation of Whittier's poem "Ichabod" represented the feeling of the large body of people then enlisted in the antislavery movement. This poem is said to have "wounded the great heart of its subject more than any other stroke that ever smote his mighty forehead."[1] His desire to preserve the Union, the heart's desire of his whole life, may have induced him, as his apologists maintain, to make all possible sacrifices; even so, his chief sacrifice was himself. The technical

[1] George F. Hoar, *Scribner's Magazine*, July, 1899.

argument of the speech was probably correct, but the moral attitude of it was a blunder, through which he lost the opportunity of making himself the leader of the great movement that was soon to bring to final settlement the questions to which his life had been devoted. Disappointment and embitterment, arising from political defeat and public criticism, hastened the work of disease, which brought his life to a close at his home in Marshfield, October 24, 1852. His last words were, "I still live." In his noblest orations he must continue to live as long as the Constitution lives, to the preservation of which his life was dedicated.

The personality of Webster was one of extraordinary impressiveness; his manner was imperial, Olympian, and his power was massive and colossal. He impressed all classes alike with a sense of the might and magnificence of irresistible strength. A remarkable combination of physical and mental endowments contributed to this effect. He was strong in physique, dignified in bearing, with splendidly molded head, swarthy face, beetling brows, deeply shading eyes that burned like fire in moments of passion, and a most noble forehead, "the front of Jove himself." A Liverpool navvy, seeing him walking along the street, cried out, "There goes a king!" Carlyle pronounced him to be "a magnificent specimen," who looked "like a walking cathedral." When speaking he seldom moved or made

Webster's Personality

a gesture, yet audiences would listen with spellbound attention. His voice was rich, flexible, and of great compass, flutelike or trumpet-toned as thought or occasion required. In private life he was as gentle and pleasing as in public life he was powerful. "His goodly person, his gracious bearing, and his benignant courtesy made him the delight of every circle he entered; in the presence of ladies, especially, his great powers seemed to robe themselves spontaneously in beauty."

His Influence

For a generation Webster was the political oracle of New England, accepted, revered, almost worshiped. Citizens of Boston who had seen him a score of times would leave their work to gaze at the wonderful man as he passed in the streets. His great speeches were read and studied in every household. He was the people's instructor in political doctrine, and gave to them new ideals of union and nationality. Love of a united country, as a distinct American virtue, was mainly his creation; he was the author of modern patriotism. Before Webster's time "Freedom" was the talismanic word of Americans; since his time, that word has been "Union."

Of all our statesmen who have exerted a great and permanent influence upon national affairs, Webster is the only one who can fairly be counted among American men of letters. He occupies in this respect the position held by Burke in English literature. His speeches

are literary as well as oratorical, because they are more than local and temporary, because they contain the elements of literary permanency — great thoughts expressed in artistic forms. Upon two simple fundamental qualities, clearness and strength, he built up a style distinctly his own, — plain, precise, unaffected, and powerful; rising at times from the level of fact and logic into passages of sublime eloquence, when he was moved by some grand thought or passion. There is little ornament, only here and there a swelling climax and a magnificent metaphor. His speech moves on with a majestic rhythm, like that of the ocean, always dignified, stately, and masterful. The illustrations are clear-cut and vivid; the mere statement of facts is sometimes so striking as to serve for demonstration; and the climax of a dry argument is often capped by a forcible touch of the imagination that lifts the whole discourse into the realm of art. He carefully revised his speeches before publication, with scrupulous regard for exactness, rather than beauty of expression. It is related that he handed the Adams and Jefferson oration to a student in his office, with the direction to "weed out all the Latin words." His preference for sturdy Saxon was not prejudice or affectation, but merely solicitude to make his language a perfect expression of himself.

His Style

The style of Webster, at its best, is the "grand style" of the classic masters. Professor Peck calls it Roman in both spirit and expression. "The closest

parallel to it is to be found in the oratory of Cicero. Its rhetoric is as perfect in its choice of phrase, in its marshaling of the sentences, in the rhythmical swing of its cadences, and in the beauty and exquisite fitness of its imagery. Yet it is far superior to Cicero's in this, that we are never conscious in Webster of that combination of weakness and insincerity, of pose and special pleading which the Ciceronian oratory exhibits, nor of the cheap facility of the trained advocate who can argue with equal plausibility on any side of every question. Webster was always intensely in earnest; the note of perfect conviction dominates his utterances; and there is an undercurrent of the passion that stirs the blood and gives enduring vitality to the words and thoughts of the inspired orator."[1]

Webster and Cicero

The peculiar eminence of Webster's oratory is shown by any comparison with that of his eloquent contemporaries; their most brilliant efforts have faded into tradition, while his remain among the inspiring classics of our literature. "Even his words have embedded themselves in the common phraseology, and come to the tongue like passages from the psalms or the poets. I do not know that a sentence or a word of Sumner's repeats itself in our everyday parlance. The exquisite periods of Everett are recalled like the consummate work of some master of music, but no note or refrain sings itself over and over again

Literary Permanency

[1] Carpenter's "American Prose," p. 103.

to our ears. The brilliant eloquence of Choate is like the flash of a bursting rocket, lingering upon the retina, indeed, after it has faded from the wings of night, but as elusive of our grasp as spray-drops that glisten in the sun. But Webster made his language the very household words of a nation."[1]

Nor is Webster's eminence affected by comparison with the great masters of English eloquence. "As an orator of reason," says Goldwin Smith, "he has no superior if he has an equal in the English language."[2] He did not possess the brilliant wit of Sheridan, nor the charm and versatility of Fox; but he was superior to both in rhetorical taste, finished style, and power of argument. "The man with whom Webster is oftenest compared is of course Burke," says Lodge. "It may be conceded at once that in creative imagination and in richness of imagery and language Burke ranks above Webster. But no one would ever have said of Webster as Goldsmith did of Burke:—

Webster and Burke

> Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
> And thought of convincing while they thought of dining.

Webster never sinned by over-refinement, or over-ingenuity, for both were utterly foreign to his nature. Still less did he impair his power in the Senate as Burke did in the Commons by talking too often and too much. If he did not have the extreme beauty

[1] John D. Long, "After-dinner and Other Speeches."
[2] "The United States," p. 181.

and grace of which Burke was capable, he was more forcible, and struck harder and more weighty blows."

Webster was not free from the temptations and frailties of greatness, and his private life was not without reproach. He earned large sums of money, but spent more than he earned, and allowed his friends to assume the burden of his debts. "And yet," says Parton, "such was the power of his genius, such was the charm of his manner, such the affectionateness of his nature, such the robust heartiness of his enjoyment of life that honorable men who knew his faults best loved him to the last." His qualities are well summarized by Carl Schurz: "Not indeed an originator of policies and measures, but a marvelous expounder of principles, laws, and facts, who illumined every topic of public concern he touched with the light of a sovereign intelligence and vast knowledge, who by overpowering argument riveted around the Union unbreakable bonds of constitutional doctrine; who awaked to new life and animated with invincible vigor the national spirit; who left to his countrymen and to the world invaluable lessons of statesmanship, right, and patriotism, in language of grand simplicity and prodigiously forceful clearness; and who might stand as its greatest man in the political history of America, had he been a master character as he was a master mind."

Final Summary

Class Study. — First Bunker Hill Oration; Oration on Adams and Jefferson; The Reply to Hayne.

Class Reading. — Second Bunker Hill Oration; First Settlement of New England (Plymouth Oration); Opening passage of the Argument in the White Murder Trial; The Drumbeat of England passage in The Presidential Protest; The Character of Washington.

Biography and Criticism. — Curtis's "Life of Daniel Webster." Lodge's "Daniel Webster" (American Statesmen). Parton's "Famous Americans." Appleton's "Cyclopædia of American Biography" (John Fiske). Hapgood's "Daniel Webster" (Beacon Biographies). Wolfe's "Literary Shrines." Everett's "Orations and Speeches," Vols. III, IV. Chamberlain's "John Adams and Other Essays." Lodge's "Studies in History." Whipple's "American Literature" (Webster as a Master of English Style), and "Essays and Reviews," Vol. I. Library of the World's Best Literature (Carl Schurz). Robert C. Winthrop's "Webster's Reply to Hayne" (*Scribner's Magazine*, January, 1894). Sparks's "Men Who Made the Nation." *Century Magazine*, Nov., 1900, March, June, Sept., 1901 (McMaster).

Holmes's "Birthday of Daniel Webster." Emerson's "Webster." Whittier's "Ichabod" and "The Lost Occasion." Wilkinson's "Webster: An Ode."

EVERETT, CHOATE, PHILLIPS, SUMNER, LINCOLN

"The Nemesis of public speaking," says Higginson, — "the thing that seems to make it almost worthless in the long run — is the impossibility of making it tell for anything after its moment is past." This melancholy truth is well illustrated by the minor orators of this period whose greatness became a tradition almost as soon as their voices were silent. Edward Everett, who was successively a professor, preacher, editor, member of Congress, minister to England, secretary of state,

governor of Massachusetts, and president of Harvard College, was justly celebrated for his extensive scholarship, fine classical tastes, and broad culture, and for the eloquence and elegance of his "occasional" addresses. Fame distinguishes him as "the most accomplished gentleman of his time," and the inspiring influence of his brilliant presence was, says Emerson, "almost comparable to that of Pericles in Athens." His popularity as a lecturer is unsurpassed in America; the lecture on "Washington" was delivered nearly one hundred and fifty times. His style was too palpably ornamented to conceal its art. The long, smooth, classical sentences are beautifully balanced and highly decorated. Dr. Holmes calls them "full-blown, high-colored, double-flowered periods," and to Emerson "all his speech was music." Yet now this coruscating rhetoric is almost as obsolete as the knightly trappings of chivalry.

Edward Everett, 1794–1865

The fame of Rufus Choate, lawyer, statesman, and orator, is closely associated with that of Webster. He was a graduate of Dartmouth and a member of Congress from Massachusetts, taking Webster's place in the Senate in 1841; he divided the honors of the bar with Webster, and his most famous oration is the "Eulogy on Daniel Webster." Remarkable for his effectiveness before juries, and justly held to be the "first of American lawyers," he was equally remarkable for qualities

Rufus Choate, 1799–1859

purely scholastic. His mind would not be limited to law. Scholarly in tastes and broad in literary attainment, he acquired an almost phenomenal command of the English language, his vocabulary comparing in extent with that of the great poets, even Milton and Shakspere. His style is Oriental in its florid opulence. He piles up adjectives with a gorgeous richness of effect, much like that which the painter produces by the laying on of successive colors; it has been said of him that he "drives a substantive and six"; and his sentences are often marvels of elaborate rhetorical structure. Such orations as the "Eulogy on Webster," "The Eloquence of Revolutionary Periods," and "American Nationality" have not yet lost all their charm, and should be studied as illustrations of a lofty classical manner of speech unknown to the present generation.

Robert C. Winthrop, who began his career as a law student in the office of Daniel Webster, resembled his fellow-orators of Boston in the amplitude of his classical culture and in his popularity as an orator of historical and commemorative occasions, which he graced with a refined and stately eloquence. He was the orator at the laying of the corner-stone of the Washington monument, in 1848, and at its dedication in 1885.

The antislavery movement had its own orator, its statesman, its poet, and its novelist. Its orator was Wendell Phillips, whose tongue was like a flaming

sword, and who never abated his burning arraignment of the national conscience until the cause of the slave was won.

> A sower of infinite seed was he, a
> Woodman that hewed toward the light,
> Who dared to be traitor to Union when
> Union was traitor to right!

Wendell Phillips, 1811–1884

Possessing by nature the resources of a great public speaker, a gracious presence, fine voice, large stores of ready knowledge, wit and humor, masterly power of denunciation, and a fearless spirit, he could with almost equal facility captivate a cultured audience or conquer a hostile one. James Bryce regards him as "one of the first orators of the present century, and not more remarkable for the finish than for the transparent simplicity of his style." Recalling the marvelous charm of his speaking — as inexplicable "as the secret of the rose's sweetness" — Curtis says: "What was heard, what was seen, was the form of noble manhood, the courteous and self-possessed tone, the flow of modulated speech, sparkling with matchless richness of illustration, with apt allusion and happy anecdote and historic parallel, with wit and pitiless invective, with melodious pathos, with stinging satire, with crackling epigram and limpid humor, like the bright ripples that play around the sure and steady prow of the resistless ship. Like an illuminated vase of odors, he glowed with concentrated and perfumed

fire." After the work of emancipation had been accomplished, Phillips continued before the public many years with such popular lectures as "The Lost Arts" and "Toussaint l'Ouverture."

The leader of the abolitionists in Congress was Charles Sumner, a man whose "soul was on fire with moral enthusiasm," who impressed himself as a speaker, not so much by eloquence, or argument, or amplitude of knowledge, as by intense moral earnestness. Academic in his tastes, preferring books, travel, and cultivated society to public life, he was forced by a sense of duty into the swirling tide of agitation against slavery, and continued to the end of his life to be the negro's devoted and chivalrous champion. He was aggressive, impetuous, and uncompromising; of all men in Congress, the slaveholders feared and hated him most. The love of right was a passion with him, and all his energies were engaged in making right prevail. "His ample learning and various accomplishments were rivaled among American public men only by those of John Quincy Adams, and during all the fury of political passion in which he lived, there was never a whisper or suspicion of his political honesty or his personal integrity." He was a noble example of what an American statesman ought to be. The celebrated address on "The True Grandeur of Nations," delivered in Boston, July 4, 1845, established his fame as an orator; the most famous of his parliamentary speeches

Charles Sumner, 1811–1874

is "The Crime against Kansas." The twelve volumes of his speeches contain much living matter, for the lofty ideals that guide his thinking, the moral fervor that fills his words, and the varied learning that everywhere enriches his expression, give a literary interest to invaluable historical material.

The work begun by Garrison, the "Liberator," was consummated by Lincoln, the "Great Emancipator."

Abraham Lincoln, 1809–1865

The memory of this wise, noble, large-hearted, plain man of the people, is a precious legacy to Americans. No president — not even Washington — has won so large a place in the hearts of his countrymen. It is fortunate, therefore, that he left some expression of himself possessing the permanency of literature. Without literary training or tastes, and with no thought of literary production, Lincoln gave to the world two or three literary masterpieces. Unconscious of style, and of the arts by which style is cultivated, he shaped for himself a style that for simplicity, directness, and strength is unsurpassed in American prose. The secret of this style is largely explained by two qualities of his nature, sincerity and deep human sympathy; when speaking he devoutly purposed that his words should stand for his thought and feeling, nothing else, and he profoundly desired to make them helpful to humanity.

The brief address at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg has been called "the top and

crown of American eloquence." This unique expression of the solemn significance of the great conflict and of the responsibilities resting upon patriotic citizens was a classic from the moment of its utterance. It is a striking contrast to the sonorous and elaborate eloquence of Webster and Everett; indeed, it marks a new era in public speaking; since Lincoln's day, orators have learned that the only sure way to be effective is to be honest and natural.

Gettysburg Address

Abraham Lincoln

But greater even than the Gettysburg address, and more characteristic, in the judgment of Schurz, is the "Second Inaugural," in which "he poured out the whole devotion and tenderness of his great soul. It had all the solemnity of a father's last admonition and blessing to his children before he lay down to die." Beneath the awkward exterior of the man, beneath the homely

Second Inaugural

wit and irrepressible humor that lighted up the surface of his life, there was a serious and pathetic nature, a spirit of melancholy, weighed down by the burdens of his fellow-men. "The inner forces of his nature played through his thought; and when great occasions touched him to the quick, his whole nature shaped his speech and gave it clear intelligence, deep feeling, and that beauty which is distilled out of the depths of the sorrows and hopes of the world."[1]

Among the antislavery agitators should be counted America's most celebrated pulpit orator, Henry Ward Beecher, who from both pulpit and platform spoke for the cause with a voice of astonishing eloquence and persuasive power. The series of addresses, given in England for the purpose of overcoming the hostility of the English people toward the North during the Civil War, is probably without a parallel in the history of oratory. His eloquence was spontaneous, fervid, strong in apt illustration, rich in humor, and abounding in original and striking forms of statement. During his long career as pastor of Plymouth church, Brooklyn, he contributed extensively to periodical literature and published many books, covering a wide variety of subjects and showing his versatility of mind and broad human interests. They range from "Lectures to Young Men," "Aids to Prayer," and "Life Thoughts" to "Pleasant Talk

Henry Ward Beecher, 1813–1887

[1] Hamilton W. Mabie, "Library of the World's Best Literature."

about Fruit, Flowers, and Farming," "Freedom and War," "Evolution and Religion," "Norwood," a novel of indifferent merit, and a "Life of Christ" of no merit at all. His most popular books were the two series of "Star Papers," and his best work is now to be found in the eleven volumes of his "Sermons," which were committed to writing by a stenographer as they were delivered. Like the work of so many others whose highest quality of genius is chiefly expressed through the living voice, Beecher's work was largely temporary in interest and influence. The magic of his personality is not felt in the printed page.

Class Study. — Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," and "Second Inaugural"; Choate's "Eulogy on Daniel Webster."

Class Reading. — Lincoln's "First Inaugural"; Everett's "Gettysburg Oration"; Phillips's "Toussaint l'Ouverture"; Sumner's "True Grandeur of Nations."

Biography and Criticism. — Nicolay and Hay's "Abraham Lincoln: A History." Herndon's "Abraham Lincoln: True Story of a Great Life." Morse's "Abraham Lincoln" (American Statesmen). Brooks's "Abraham Lincoln" (Heroes of the Nation). Chittenden's "Recollections of President Lincoln." Carl Schurz's "Abraham Lincoln." Sumner's "Eulogy on Lincoln" (Works, Vol. IX). Lowell's "Political Essays" (Prose Works, Vol. V). Everett's "Orations and Speeches," Vol. IV. Harrison's "George Washington and other Addresses." Lowell's "Commemoration Ode." Stoddard's "Abraham Lincoln." Maurice Thompson's "Lincoln's Grave." Whitman's "My Captain." Edwin Markham's "Abraham Lincoln." — Dana's "Life and Public Services of Edward Everett." Appleton's "Cyclopædia of American Biography." Emerson's "Life and Letters in New England." Whipple's "Character and Characteristic Men." — Austin's

"Life and Times of Wendell Phillips." Martyn's "Wendell Phillips" (American Reformers). Curtis's "Orations and Addresses," Vol. III. Julia Ward Howe's "Reminiscences." Aldrich's "Monody on the Death of Wendell Phillips." John Boyle O'Reilly's "Wendell Phillips." — Pierce's "Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner." Storey's "Charles Sumner" (American Statesmen). Grimké's "Charles Sumner, the Scholar in Politics" (American Reformers). Curtis's "Orations and Addresses," Vol. III. Whipple's "Recollections of Eminent Men." Higginson's "Contemporaries." Longfellow's "Charles Sumner" and "Three Friends." Whittier's "To C. S." and "Sumner." — Neilson's "Memories of Rufus Choate." Whipple's "Recollections of Eminent Men."

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

1807–1892

John Greenleaf Whittier was born in Haverhill, Mass., December 17, 1807, in an isolated farmhouse that had been the home of his paternal ancestors for four generations. Near by is the Merrimac, celebrated in his poems, and not far away the ocean can be heard breaking on Salisbury beach. The simple Quaker household is faithfully described in "Snowbound." The mother was a refined and saintly woman, whose qualities were repeated in her gifted son. To a story-telling uncle, "innocent of books," but "rich in lore of fields and brooks," he owed the first kindling of his imagination. Like every farmer's boy, he was kept busy with "chores," and allowed but scant privileges of education. The

The Quaker Boy

knowledge he gained was largely that of his "Barefoot Boy": —

> Knowledge never learned of schools,
> Of the wild bee's morning chase,
> Of the wild flower's time and place,
> Flight of fowl and habitude
> Of the tenants of the wood.

There were few books in the home except the Bible and memorials of Quaker saints; but these he read until he knew them by heart, as well as all the books he could borrow; once he enjoyed with his sister the stolen delight of a Waverley novel, and also a copy of Shakspere, which he obtained while visiting a relative in Boston and carried home with a troubled conscience.

John Greenleaf Whittier

When he was about fourteen, a schoolmaster one evening read aloud to the family Burns's poems. The boy listened spellbound, and from that evening he was a

poet. It was a revelation that "home-seen nature," such as a farmer's boy knew, could be poetical. Burns became his inspiration and model, and to his memory he paid in after years a noble and loyal poetic tribute. He wrote verses profusely, imitating Burns and other poets, encouraged by his

The Young Poet

Whittier's Birthplace

sister, who became his first literary agent. Believing his poems to be as good as others in the poet's corner of the local newspaper, she sent one without his knowledge to the editor; when the paper came to the boy poet, while at work with his father upon a stone wall, his "heart stood still for a moment" with strange delight at finding his own verses in print. The editor, the young William Lloyd Garrison, discovered his modest contributor and urged the father to give him

an education. Such was the first acquaintance, in 1826, of these two distinguished antislavery agitators. It was now agreed that Greenleaf should attend the Haverhill Academy, on condition that he paid his own way, which he did for a little more than a year, mainly by making slippers at eight cents a pair. A few terms in the district school and this year in the academy constituted the whole of Whittier's scholastic career; it was the more significant tribute to his worth and culture, therefore, when in later life he was elected an overseer of Harvard University.

He now drifted easily into journalism, aided by his friend Garrison, and held for brief periods editorial positions in Boston, Hartford, and Philadelphia. While at Hartford, in 1831, he published his first book, "Legends of New England, in Prose and Verse," a book that his riper judgment consigned to the fire whenever a copy came in his way. In spite of his Quaker heritage and inherent gentleness, he was strongly drawn toward a political career, and for many years he played an active part in the political turmoil of the times. As he himself put it, he "threw the rough armor of rude and turbulent controversy over a keenly sensitive bosom." Poetry was long "incidental to politics." In 1833 he published, at his own expense, a vigorous pamphlet on the slavery question, entitled "Justice and Expediency." This ruined his political prospects at once, and closed the columns of many periodicals to his poetry. But

The Quaker Politician

he made the sacrifice deliberately, and cast in his lot with the little band of detested "abolitionists." He was made secretary of the Antislavery Society, and signed the famous "Declaration of Sentiments," framed by Garrison. Of this he once said, "I set a higher value on my name as appended to the Antislavery Declaration of 1833 than on the title page of any book."

A New Inspiration

He had now consecrated himself to a great cause, and a marked change appeared in his poetry; the earnest and vigorous soul of the reformer entered into it. He had written hundreds of pleasing, rhetorical poems that had circulated widely and brought him flattering fame, but very few of these by his own desire were retained in final editions of his works. The true poet was first heard in the poems upon slavery, which he now wrote in rapid succession, trumpet calls to duty, swift and fearless attacks like the speeches of Phillips and Garrison, "hammer strokes against flinty prejudices." In impetuous, ringing stanzas, he poured forth his hot indignation, startling the conscience of the whole nation. Against the recreant clergy he cries out: —

> How long, O Lord! how long
> Shall such a priesthood barter truth away,
> And in thy name, for robbery and wrong
> At thy own altars pray?

For the pursuers of fugitive slaves he has a song of stinging irony, "The Hunters of Men," and another for the auctioneer in the slave market: —

A Christian! going, gone!
Who bids for God's own image?

And in "Massachusetts to Virginia" he sounds a "blast from Freedom's Northern hills" as terrible in its deep-toned scorn and denunciation as the voice of an ancient prophet.

Whitter once remarked that he must have inherited "somewhat of the grim Berserker spirit." He was a good fighter in a righteous cause, lacking neither physical nor moral courage. While editing the *Freeman*, in Philadelphia, his office was sacked and burned, and on several occasions his life was endangered by mob violence. Ill health frequently forced him to retire to the quiet of his home, yet he always kept well to the front of the conflict. "Whenever occasion offered," says Lowell, "some burning lyric of his flew across the country like the fiery cross to warn and rally." He was the trusted adviser of statesmen, and a skillful manager of conventions and other political movements; twice he represented his native town in the state legislature, and once, in 1843, would have been sent to Congress, had he not become alarmed at the prospect of being elected and withdrawn his candidacy. He wrote extensively in both prose and verse for the *National Era*, the chief organ of the antislavery party. The first number contained the fine poem, "Randolph of Roanoke." Here first appeared "Maud Muller," "Angels of Buena Vista," and "Icha-

A Good Fighter

bod," and also, in serial form, "Margaret Smith's Journal," a pleasing description of old time manners and customs in New England.

The first collection of Whittier's poems appeared in 1837, and a second collection in 1839. In 1843 "Lays of My Home" appeared, the first book to bring the poet any pecuniary return, the others having been published in the interest of "the cause." The slavery poems were gathered into a volume, in 1849, with the title "Voices of Freedom," and this was followed the next year by the "Songs of Labor," celebrating in easy-flowing and popular, though not especially poetical, verses the homely beauty of shoemaking, fishing, lumbering, and other forms of common toil. Without diminution of patriotic zeal, Whittier was now turning his thoughts more frequently to the poetry of his home surroundings, and we begin to hear the firm strains of nature-loving and domestic song that constituted his final fame. About this time Longfellow, after meeting him, wrote in his journal, "He grows milder and mellower as does his poetry." But his Tyrtæan strain did not cease until the slave was free and the Union saved, and throughout the great conflict among the most powerful leaders was this Quaker knight of the pen. His reform poetry closed with the noble pæan "Laus Deo." While sitting in the Friends' meeting, he heard the bells ringing out the glad news of the passage of the constitutional amendment abolishing

Broadening Poetic Interest

slavery, and this hymn of thankfulness took shape in his mind. The hopes and trials of thirty years were gloriously consummated: —

It is done!
Clang of bell and roar of gun
Send the tidings up and down.
How the belfries rock and reel!
How the great guns, peal on peal,
Fling the joy from town to town!

In 1836 Whittier sold the old farm and purchased a modest cottage in Amesbury, which continued to be his home for fifty years. With him in this delightful hermitage, kept with exquisite Quaker neatness, were his mother and his gifted sister Elizabeth, whose sympathetic and helpful relations to her brother remind us of Dorothea Wordsworth. The greatest calamity of Whittier's life was the death of this sister in 1864, seven years after the death of his mother. "The great motive of life seems lost," he wrote to a friend. The shadowed home now stimulated his memories of the old home at Haverhill, and out of his devoted love and tenderness grew his masterpiece, "Snow-bound, a Winter Idyl," which was published in 1866, with a success rivaling that of "Evangeline." This beautiful fireside idyl is worthily compared with Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," the "Winter Evening" in Cowper's "Task," and Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night." "It is perfect in its conception and complete in its execution; it is

Domestic Poetry

the New England home, entire, with its characteristic scene, its incidents of household life, its Christian virtues. It is, in a peculiar sense, the one poem of New England — so completely indigenous that the soil has fairly created it, so genuine as to be better than history."[1]

"Snow-bound" was followed the next year by the "Tent on the Beach," a series of narrative poems woven together in the manner of Longfellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn." Whittier was now universally loved. Even his enemies had forgiven him. Among the many tributes from fellow-poets was genuine praise from the Southern poet, Paul H. Hayne. The vehement reformer had disappeared from his poetry, and the simple bucolic poet stood forth, singing the very heart songs of the people. The years of his long old age he spent in happy enjoyment of the rewards of fame, leisurely busy always with his pen. In 1890 he published a small volume privately for his friends; of one of these poems Lowell wrote: "Your 'Captain's Well' seems to me in your happiest vein. Tears came to my eyes as I read it." Four weeks after writing a birthday poem "To Oliver Wendell Holmes," he died at the home of a relative in Hampton Falls, N. H., September 7, 1892. Characteristic of his fine heart, as shown through life, were his dying words, "My love — to — the — world."

Happy Old Age

Of the New England poets Whittier owed least to the

[1] Professor Woodberry, *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1892.

culture of books and society. He lived all his life in close contact with humble workers with the hand; he would not have breathed naturally in the intellectual atmosphere of Cambridge; he had little companionship with scholars and the world's great men, but the men who followed the plow and built stone walls were his brothers. He loved better to discuss politics with his neighbors in the village store than to meet the literary people of Boston in Mrs. Fields's parlors. "He talks just like common folks," said one of his neighbors; "we was talkin' about the apples one day, and he said, 'Some years they ain't wuth pickin'' — just like anybody, you know." This nearness to "common folks," to honest, rude, laboring manhood, was the source of his strength and popularity. He was shy and reticent among strangers, but was not unsocial by nature nor a hermit by choice; delicate health accounts for much of his recluseness. He knew Europe only through books, he was never farther from home than Washington, he was never in a theater. He always wore the Quaker coat, always in conversation clung to the ungrammatical Quaker pronouns, and attended faithfully the old-fashioned Quaker meeting of solemn silences. Hazlitt thought that "a Quaker poet would be a literary phenomenon." Whittier himself occasionally smiled at his Quaker coat when blowing his battle trumpet. In the "Tent on the Beach" he draws a portrait of himself: —

Personality

A silent, shy, peace-loving man,
He seemed no fiery partisan.

But everything that he wrote was a faithful and genuine expression of his nature.

The character of Whittier as a poet is well defined by the historian Parkman; he is "The poet of New England. His genius drew its nourishment from her soil; his pages are the mirror of her outward nature, and the strong utterance of her inward life." Like Burns, he is a rustic poet of his native fields, speaking the language of the people with whom he was born. "As a bucolic poet of his own section," says Stedman, "rendering its pastoral life and aspect, Whittier surpasses all rivals." But his poetry is provincial only in its local coloring; its sentiment is universal, for the greater number of the human family live in close contact with the soil. His main theme is love of home, humanity, and God. Duty to country and to his fellow-man was his first great inspiration, and for thirty years he made poetry an instrument of reform, thus sacrificing in the heat of campaign vehemence the finer graces of thought and expression demanded by true art. Only a few of the slavery poems rise above a temporary and historic interest. His finest poetry belongs to the second period of his career, when he exchanged his character as "Freedom's Trumpeter" for that of the gentle "Hermit of Amesbury." In the "Proem" he states his conscious limitations with characteristic modesty: —

Poetic Qualities

I love the old melodious lays
Which softly melt the ages through,
The songs of Spenser's golden days,
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew.

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvelous notes I try;
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of the sky.

If reform was the conscience of his poetry, religion was its soul. Of all our secular poets he is the most religious, preaching always a creed that is broad, generous, and beautiful. Of their kind there is nothing finer in our literature than his hymns, which some one has called "so many acts of faith." The lofty poem, "The Eternal Goodness," John Bright declared to be "worth a crowd of sermons." The doubts and questionings in "My Soul and I," "Chapel of the Hermits," and "Questions of Life," indicate simply that his mind was open to the progressive influences of the times.

His poetic forms are few and simple; his genius was essentially lyrical, and his love of a story made him our most natural balladist. "We have no American ballad-writer," says Bayard Taylor, "that is, writer of ballads founded on our national history and tradition, who can be compared with him, either in the range or skillful treatment of his material." He was the first to use the Indian legends,

A Balladist

but "Mogg Megone" and the "Bridal of Pennacook" are heavily overshadowed by "Hiawatha." With legends of witchcraft, Quaker persecution, and other themes of local tradition, he was supremely successful. Folklore is closely associated in his interest with external nature. To him nature was not majestic and solemn, as to Bryant, but cheerful and comfort giving, rather, delighting the senses with the perfume of clover, apple blossoms, and beehives. Professor Wendell pertinently notes that "the peculiar character of his poetry of nature is that it is not interpretative, but faithfully representative." This literalness and directness constitute its special charm.

> Such music as the woods and streams
> Sang in his ear, he sang aloud.

The faults of his poetry are obvious and forgivable. He lacked the power of artistic compression, the diffuseness of the thought running sometimes into mere commonplace. His liking for rhymed tetrameters, due perhaps to his early devotion to Burns, produces monotony; his meter often halts, and his rhymes are occasionally atrocious. "I should be hung for my bad rhymes anywhere south of Mason and Dixon's line," he wrote to his publisher, Fields, to whose sensitive ear such rhymes as *martyr — water, pen — been,* were a kind of mild torture. But in spite of criticism he generally held to his "Yankee rights of pronunciation." However, for his

His Faults

very faults we love him, for they prove him true. He did not possess Longfellow's cosmopolitan culture, nor Lowell's affluent knowledge of literature, nor Holmes's iridescent wit, but his spontaneous directness and grand sincerity give to his poetry an effectiveness that art alone cannot command.

Although much that Whittier wrote appealed to temporary interests, and his chosen audience was always the plain people, yet of the permanence of his fame there can be little doubt. "Of all American poets," says Lowell, "with the single exception of Longfellow, Whittier has been the most popular, and in his case more than in that of any other the popularity has been warmed through with affection." Says Stoddard: "Men of letters respect his work for its sincerity, simplicity, and downright manliness, and average readers of poetry respect it because they can understand it. There is not a grown man or woman in the land who does not readily enter into the aspiration and discontent of 'Maud Muller,' and into the glowing patriotism of 'Barbara Frietchie.' Whether the incident which is the inspiration of the latter ever occurred is more than doubtful; nevertheless, the poem is one that the world will not willingly let die. The reputation of such poems is immediate and permanent, and beyond criticism, favorable or other; the touch of nature in them is beyond all art."[1]

Final Judgments

[1] Richard Henry Stoddard, *Scribner's Magazine*, August, 1879.

"To all of us, what Whittier sings is dear. For he *sings*. The tune is simple; but the notes are fresh and clear, the melody has the thrill of the robin's and the wood thrush's songs, the feeling is that of the genuine lyric that comes from the heart, and therefore, goes to it. We have not yet had world poets in America, but Whittier's verse is that to which the American born and bred responds most naturally. We must look elsewhere for learning, for a philosophy, for exotic beauty. Whittier's was the voice that more than a generation ago proclaimed most clearly the duty of men, and that now calls us most sweetly to thoughts of olden days."[1]

Class Study. — Snow-bound; Barefoot Boy; My Playmate; Proem; Memories; Maud Muller; Skipper Ireson's Ride; Telling the Bees; Cassandra Southwick; The Pine Tree; Randolph of Roanoke; Ichabod; The Lost Occasion; Laus Deo; The Last Walk in Autumn; My Psalm; The Eternal Goodness.

Class Reading. — The Tent on the Beach; Among the Hills; Prelude to Among the Hills; In School Days; Barbara Frietchie; The Pipes of Lucknow; The King's Missive; The Fishermen; The Corn Song; Cobbler Keezar's Vision; Marguerite; Massachusetts to Virginia; Mabel Martin; Burns.

Biography and Criticism. — Pickard's "Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier." Kennedy's "Life, Genius, and Writings of Whittier" and "John Greenleaf Whittier, the Poet of Freedom." Underwood's "John Greenleaf Whittier." Linton's "John Greenleaf Whittier" (Great Writers). Mrs. Fields's "Whittier: Notes of his Life and Friendships." Burton's "John Greenleaf Whittier" (Beacon Biographies).

[1] Professor G. R. Carpenter, "Library of the World's Best Literature."

Mary B. Claflin's "Personal Recollections of Whittier." Flower's "Whittier, Prophet, Seer and Man." Gilder's "Authors at Home." Wolfe's "Literary Shrines." Miss Mitford's "Recollections of a Literary Life." Shepard's "Pen Pictures of Modern Authors." Stedman's "Poets of America." Richardson's "American Literature." Woodberry's "Makers of Literature." Wendell's "Stelligeri" and "Literary History of America." Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Higginson's "Contemporaries." Lawton's "New England Poets." Hazletine's "Chats about Books, Poets, and Novelists."

Poets' Tributes. — Longfellow's "Three Silences of Molinos." Lowell's "To Whittier, on his Seventy-fifth Birthday." Holmes's "For Whittier's Seventieth Birthday," "To John Greenleaf Whittier," and "In Memory of John Greenleaf Whittier." Taylor's "A Friend's Greeting." Hayne's "To the Poet Whittier." Stedman's "Ad Vatem" and "Ad Vigilem." E. S. Phelps's "Whittier." Lucy Larcom's "J. G. W." Cranch's "To John Greenleaf Whittier."

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

1811–1896

When Lincoln first met Harriet Beecher Stowe, he seized her hand saying, "Is this the little woman who made this great war?" Such, widely, has been the estimate of the influence of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" upon American history. Mrs. Stowe was not a great writer, but she wrote one great book, and although she wrote indefatigably until extreme old age, and published thirty volumes of stories and sketches, her rank among the immortals is determined by this one impulse of genius. It was the outpouring of a heart "bursting with anguish"; she often spoke of the

writing as having been compelled by a higher power; in answer to a compliment she once said, "I did not write it; God wrote it."

The story of Mrs. Stowe's girlhood presents an interesting picture of New England life at the beginning of the century. She was born in Litchfield, Conn., in 1811, one of the eleven children of the Rev. Lyman Beecher, of whom the most distinguished was the pulpit orator, Henry Ward Beecher. The atmosphere of her youth was strongly theological. Her father's library contained only such books as Bell's "Sermons," Toplady's "On Predestination," and Law's "Serious Call," which filled her with a "vague awe," and led her to wonder if she "should ever be old enough to know what it was all about."

Girlhood

Her imagination was first fired by a copy of the "Arabian Nights" which she found at the bottom of a barrel of musty sermons; and the discovery of a fragment of "Don Quixote," lying "in forty or fifty *disjecta membra* amid Calls, Appeals, Sermons, Replies, and Rejoinders," was to her, she says, "like the rising of an enchanted island out of an ocean of mud." Her first public appearance was at twelve years of age, with a school composition entitled "Can the Immortality of the Soul be proved by the Light of Nature?" She dreamed of becoming a poet and wrote verses of some merit, but for this she was reproved by her sister Catharine and put to studying Butler's "Analogy." From 1832 to 1850 she lived in Cincinnati, where her

husband was associated with her father in founding Lane Theological Seminary. There she gathered the knowledge and experience out of which her great book was made. In 1850, when men's hearts were aflame with indignation at Webster's Seventh of March speech, a sister wrote from Boston: "Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something to make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is." Crushing the letter in her hand as she read it aloud to her family, she said: "I will write something. I will if I live."

In the following April, 1851, the first chapter of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" appeared in the *National Era*, an antislavery paper published at Washington. The next year the completed story was published in book form and over three hundred thousand copies were sold within a twelve-month. The success was phenomenal. No American book has ever approached its circulation, and no novel in the language, probably, has been so widely read. It has been translated as many as forty times and into all the tongues of the civilized world. Its influence in arousing the public conscience was tremendous, for it pictured the evils of slavery with a dramatic vividness to minds that had hitherto viewed it only theoretically and afar off; the argument was the stronger also because she strove to paint with fairness the bright as well as the dark features of the system. The literary qualities of this work are well

"Uncle Tom's Cabin"

summarized by Professor Beers: "It is easy now to point out defects of taste and art in this masterpiece, to show that the tone is occasionally melodramatic, that some of the characters are conventional, and that the literary execution is in parts feeble and in others coarse. In spite of all it remains true that 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is a great book, the work of genius seizing instinctively upon its opportunity and uttering the thought of the time with a power that thrilled the heart of the nation and of the world."

Her Minor Works

Mrs. Stowe wrote a second story of slavery, "Dred; A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp"; and she pictured New England life with literary skill, and often with delicious humor, in "The Minister's Wooing" and "Oldtown Folks." The character of Sam Lawson in the latter is one of the choice figures of American fiction. In this field of quaint, domestic realism she was the precursor of Mary E. Wilkins, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Sarah Orne Jewett, and others who are now popular. When nearing her seventieth year she wrote "Poganuc People," which Mrs. Fields thinks "one of the most exquisite of her books of sketches." But everything that she afterward wrote sank quickly into insignificance in comparison with "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which continues to command an almost universal interest.

Reading and Discussion. — Uncle Tom's Cabin; Oldtown Folks.

Biography and Criticism. — C. E. Stowe's "Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe." Mrs. Fields's "Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe." *New England Magazine*, September, 1896 (George Willis Cooke). *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1896 (Charles Dudley Warner). Carpenter's "American Prose" (Richard Burton).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Winsor's "Memorial History of Boston," Vol. III, chap. 6. Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America." Rhodes's "History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850." Greeley's "The American Conflict." McMaster's "History of the People of the United States," Vol. V, chap. 45. Goldwin Smith's "United States," chaps. 4, 5. Higginson's "Cheerful Yesterdays" and "Contemporaries." Grimké's "Garrison" and "Sumner" (American Reformers Series). Garrison's "William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of his Life." Samuel J. May's "Some Recollections of our Antislavery Conflict." Birney's "James G. Birney and his Times." William Still's "Underground Railroad." Siebert's "Underground Railway from Slavery to Freedom." Von Holst's "Constitutional History of the United States," Vol. II, chap. 2, and "John C. Calhoun." Channing's "Works," Vols. II, V, and VI. Johnston's "American Orations," Vols. II and III. Morse's "John Quincy Adams," chap. 3. Burgess's "The Middle Period" (American History Series) chaps. 11, 18–21. Wilson's "Division and Reunion" (Epochs of American History). Julia Ward Howe's "Reminiscences." Schurz's "Henry Clay." Lodge's "Daniel Webster." Davis's "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government." Chamberlin's "John Brown" (Beacon Biographies). Chadwick's "Theodore Parker, Preacher and Reformer." Old South Leaflets, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAMBRIDGE POETS

THE period from about 1835 to 1875 may be regarded as the Augustan Age of American literature, and the imperial center of intellectual activity during that period was Boston. The greater part of our literature that has been stamped with the seal of permanent approval was produced between those dates, and its producers were associated in a charming literary brotherhood, of which Boston was the accustomed meeting place; for in their relations to literature Cambridge and Concord are to be regarded as organic parts of Boston, associated ganglia of a single brain. It was not an extravagant boast of Dr. Holmes that Boston was then "the thinking center of the continent." No other American city has enjoyed such exclusive distinction of literary eminence, and with the increasing diffusion of literary interests it is probable that no city will ever again achieve such intellectual honors. "Literature had a high lineage in Boston in those days," says Howells, "a real aristocracy of intellect. To say Prescott, Motley, Parkman, Lowell, Norton, Higginson, Dana, Emerson, Channing, was to say patrician,

The Literary Capital

in the truest and often in the best sense, if not the largest. Boston was small, but these were of her first citizens, and their primacy, in its way, was of the same quality as that, say, of the chief families of Venice."

The common nursery of these intellectual aristocrats was Harvard College. Cambridge was then a quiet

The Harvard Gate

country village, with broad streets, blooming gardens, and fragrant orchards, a place where noble thought had room to expand in touch with woods and fields and the high heavens. There in the academic shade of spreading elms, "peaceful among the storied scenes of war, stands the university, benign mother of educated New England, coeval with the Puritan settlement, which has given the master

Cambridge

impulse to American civilization." Looking out upon the college green was the old "gambrel-roofed house," rich in Revolutionary associations, the beloved birthplace of the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table"; and "somewhat back from the village street," in a stately mansion whose walls had known familiarly the voices of George and Martha Washington, dwelt Longfellow in the perfect peace of domestic happiness, distilling in the alembic of his pure soul imperishable song; and a ten minutes' walk beyond lived Lowell, in poetic seclusion, among the birds and books of "Elmwood." There were professors in those days who were more than teachers and "specialists"; indeed, it is a peculiar honor to the teaching guild that the two greatest American poets were called "professors" during the better part of their lives.

A new epoch in American culture had been opened about 1820 by the lectures of Everett and the eloquence of Channing. Jared Sparks had laid the foundation for a school of American history. Ticknor and Longfellow removed much of the provincial hardness of letters by bringing students into contact with the choicest literature of German and the Romance languages; and Lowell and Norton followed them in diffusing the inspiring influences of European art and poetry. Holmes mingled wit and wisdom in the lecture rooms of the medical school with his inimitable zest; while Felton, the accomplished Grecian, and Agassiz, the scientist, contrib-

A Culture Epoch

uted to culture quite as much as to learning. With the exception of Hawthorne, whose star, like Milton's, "dwelt apart," all of the great New England group were closely related to Harvard College. Even the farmer poet of Essex was made an "overseer" of the university. This intimate and dominant relationship to American literature sustained by Harvard during this period is not likely to be established again by any American college.

A special focal influence in literature at this time was the *Atlantic Monthly*, a magazine whose unique distinction among American literary periodicals is to have been purely literary throughout its whole career. Established in 1857 by a coterie of Cambridge writers, who thereafter constituted the famous "Saturday Club," and edited successively by men who stand for our finest literary life,—Lowell, Fields, Howells, Aldrich, and Scudder,—it has represented the best ideals and traditions of literary art. To the columns of this magazine were contributed, almost exclusively, the choicest productions of Emerson, Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, Lowell, and others of the New England group.

The Atlantic Monthly

The members of this distinguished group are characterized by certain qualities that are supremely significant in respect to the development of American thought and art. The character of the Puritans entered into their work; they had lofty ideals of art, and pursued them with scrupulous earnestness.

Literature with them was not a diversion, or a profession, so much as a sacred trust. And their writing was always colored with the finest morality. There was nothing bohemian, lawless, or sensational about them; no apologies or explanations have to be made in the criticism of their lives and work. Says Professor Wendell: "These men are our leaders; and they are noble leaders to follow. Whatever their shortcomings, whatever their errors, the world rarely affords the spectacle of such a group; silently chosen from among their fellows for honest work honestly done, honest words honestly spoken, these men, as we study their lives, triumphantly prove how nearly stainless human manhood may be."

Moral Character of the Group

The midyears of this period were golden years for the literature of the English tongue. The Victorian Age in England, the second richest period in English literature, was at its highest point of productivity. In 1847, the year of Longfellow's "Evangeline" and Emerson's "Poems," Tennyson's "Princess," Thackeray's "Vanity Fair," and Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" were published. The next year saw Macaulay's "History of England," from which modern historical writing dates. Within the decade from 1847 to 1857 there appeared Tennyson's "In Memoriam" and "Maud," Thackeray's "Pendennis," "Henry Esmond," "Newcomes," "Virginians," "English Humorists," and "Four Georges," Dickens's "Dombey and Son," "David Copperfield," "Bleak House," and "Little Dorrit," Kingsley's "Hypatia" and "Westward Ho!" Ruskin's "Stones of Venice," "Seven Lamps of Architecture," and the third and fourth volumes of "Modern Painters," Bulwer Lytton's

A Rich Decade

"Caxtons," "Harold," and "My Novel," Miss Mulock's "John Halifax," Trollope's "Barchester Towers," the first volumes of Froude's "History of England," Buckle's "History of Civilization," Carlyle's "Latter-day Pamphlets" and "Life of John Sterling," Landor's "Imaginary Conversations of Greeks and Romans," Wordsworth's "Prelude," Browning's "Men and Women" and "Christmas Eve," Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh" and "Sonnets from the Portuguese," Arnold's "Poems," and Clough's "Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich." In America during the same decade we had Longfellow's "Golden Legend" and "Hiawatha," Lowell's "Biglow Papers," "Fable for Critics" and "Vision of Sir Launfal," Whittier's "Voices of Freedom," and "Songs of Labor," Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," "House of Seven Gables" and "Blithedale Romance," Emerson's "Representative Men," "English Traits," and "Miscellanies," Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Thoreau's "Walden," Bayard Taylor's "Poems of the Orient," Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic," Parkman's "Conspiracy of Pontiac," and Holmes's "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table." Few decades in the history of any literature can be found with a list like this. The next year, 1858, brought forth George Eliot's "Scenes from Clerical Life," and Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." Surely literature then dwelt upon the heights, and the reading public enjoyed a precious intimacy with fine minds.

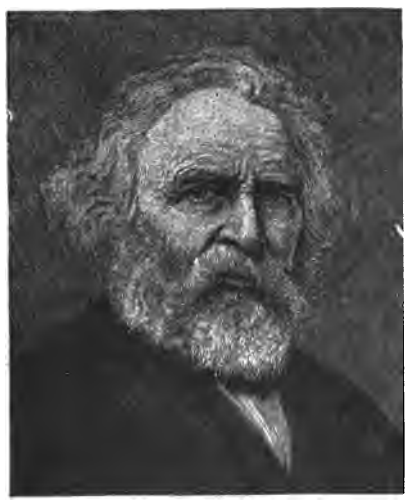
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1807–1882

The first American Longfellow settled in Newbury, Mass., in 1676, and married a sister of the famous Judge Sewall. Stephen Longfellow, the poet's father, was a graduate of Harvard, and a successful lawyer of Portland, "the beautiful town that is seated by the sea." Here the son Henry was born, February 27,

1807. The mother, Zilpah Wadsworth, was a descendant of Priscilla, the Puritan maid, who did not marry Miles Standish. Thus the blood of both Pilgrim and Puritan flowed in the poet's veins.

In early childhood Longfellow showed the qualities that characterized his whole life, tenderness, gentleness, and refined taste. Having shot a robin one day, he was so grieved upon looking at the dead bird that he gave up that form of sport forever. Throughout his school days he showed a distaste for all rude sports. At seven years of age he was "half through his Latin grammar." In his twelfth year, Irving's "Sketch Book" appeared, and this he read with "ever-increasing wonder and delight." Authorship began at thirteen with his first poem, "The Battle at Lovell's Pond," published in the *Portland Gazette*. He entered Bowdoin College at fourteen, and sus-



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Youth and Education

tained throughout his course the reputation of being agreeable, scholarly, and "always a gentleman." At graduation, in 1825, the question of a profession pressed for decision. To his father he wrote: "I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it." But literature was in those days an impossible profession to live by. For the "Psalm of Life," when published, he was promised five dollars, and received nothing. Naturally, the prudent father urged him to study law; but the way to a career of letters was unexpectedly opened. The college fathers, having noted the promising growth of his scholarship and literary gifts, offered to make him Professor of Modern Languages, after suitable preparation by study in Europe. Accordingly, the next three years were spent with enthusiastic delight in studying the languages and literature of France, Spain, Italy, and Germany; and the broad familiarity with Old World culture gained at this time exercised an important influence upon his whole literary career.

Longfellow spent five successful years at Bowdoin, joyously busy with his studies, preparing text-books for his classes in French and Spanish, writing valuable articles for the *North American Review*, and converting his notes of European travel and study into the charming chapters of "Outre-Mer," his first artistic production, published in 1835. In 1836 he succeeded George Ticknor as Professor of Modern

Languages at Harvard, having made special preparation for the position by another year's study in Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and Germany. At Rotterdam the first great sorrow of his life came to him in the death of his wife, whom he had married in Portland in 1831, "the being beauteous" of the poem, "Footsteps of Angels." The effect of this sorrow may be traced in his writing for some years. The "Psalm of Life," published two years later, was "a voice from my inmost heart," he said. The beautiful romance, "Hyperion," is largely a record of his thoughts and experiences during this period. He speaks autobiographically through the hero, Paul Flemming, who "buried himself in old dusty books, and worked his way diligently through the ancient poetic lore of Germany." With the new poets of Germany, also, Goethe, Heine, Uhland, and the others, he made himself intimately familiar, and to the flowery Jean Paul Richter he was strongly drawn.

Professorships; First Sorrow; "Hyperion"

At Cambridge he became at once popular both in college and in society. Splendidly equipped for his work, a master of all the literary languages of Europe, he opened a new world to the students by bringing to them the rich treasures of Old World art, tradition, romance, and song. Under the charm of his refined personality a new atmosphere of literary culture was created, which has given a transcendent fame to Cambridge and her

At Cambridge; "Voices of the Night"

spiritual suburb, Boston. He took rooms, in 1837, in the Craigie house, celebrated as the headquarters of Washington, which was henceforth to be his home. Here, in Washington's chamber, he wrote "Hyperion" and "Voices of the Night," which were published in

Longfellow's Home in Cambridge

1839. With the latter his fame as a poet began. This cherished little volume contained the "Psalm of Life," "Footsteps of Angels," "The Reaper and the Flowers," and other favorites, with his translations, and five of his college poems that he thought worthy of preservation. The early poems were devoted to nature, and echoed the voice of Bryant; in the others a deep-toned personal chord was sounded. Two years later ap-

peared the striking ballads, "The Skeleton in Armor" and "The Wreck of the Hesperus," which established immediately Longfellow's superiority as a story-teller in verse. For strength, simplicity, and swiftness these are among the few modern ballads that are worthy of comparison with the minstrelsy of old.

He made a brief trip to Europe in 1842 for his health. A visit to Bruges gave us the sweet "Belfry" poems. A sonnet written during this absence, too personal for publication, expressed the yearning of his spirit for high and noble things: —

> Half of my life is gone, and I have let
> The years slip from me and have not fulfilled
> The aspirations of my youth, to build
> Some tower of song with lofty parapet.

Third Trip to Europe

During the return voyage he wrote the "Poems on Slavery," which added another poetic voice to the cause of freedom; but they did not equal in passionate power the poems of Whittier on the same subject. Soon after his return he married Frances Appleton, the Mary Ashburton of "Hyperion," "whom to remember," says William Winter, "is to wonder that so much loveliness and worth could take a mortal shape." His next volume was "The Spanish Student," a drama, which suggests the variety of form and subject for which his genius seemed always seeking. This was followed, in 1846, by the "Belfry of Bruges," a volume containing some of his finest lyrics, such as the "Arsenal at Springfield," "The Bridge,"

"The Arrow and the Song," and the "Old Clock on the Stairs." Nothing more exquisitely artistic and beautiful than some of these songs has appeared in our literature. But the author was already at work upon a loftier "tower of song."

In 1847, the year of Tennyson's "Princess," "Evangeline" was published. The theme was given to the poet by Hawthorne, a story of love and pathos well suited to his tastes.

> Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,
> Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,
> List to the mournful tradition still sung by the pines of the forest.

"Evangeline"

The meter, the classical dactylic hexameter, was a bold experiment, and much criticised as un-English, but the marvelous popularity of the poem has been a full vindication of the author's judgment. Dr. Holmes read it as he would have "listened to some exquisite symphony." The lingering melancholy, the grace and tenderness of this simple tale, wandering through scenes of primeval and pastoral beauty, exercise an irresistible charm upon readers of every class and condition. It is the "flower of American idyls." Another successful experiment with English hexameter was made in the "Courtship of Miles Standish," in which the poet, quite unlike himself, introduces a frolicsome humor, and softens the hard picture of the

Plymouth colony with poetic tints for which we are delightedly grateful.

Next to "Evangeline" in original merit is "Hiawatha," published in 1855, a poem more redolent of the primitive soil of America than anything else in our literature. It is a forest epic, an "Indian Edda." Here Longfellow's fondness for experiment is again seen. The form, borrowed from the "Kalevala" of Finland, consists of the trochaic tetrameter verse, then almost unknown to English poetry, with parallelism, or the repetition of lines in slightly varied form. It was strange and curious, and the critics and parodists made merry with the simple verses, but it has won a complete triumph over cavil and criticism. It is "sweet and wholesome as maize," wrote Emerson. The Indians may not be more true to fact than Cooper's Indians, but the truth is sufficient for imaginative art. "'Hiawatha' is the one poem," says Stedman, "that beguiles the reader to see the birch and ash, the heron and eagle and deer, as they seem to the red man himself, and to join for the moment in his simple creed and wonderment."

"Hiawatha"

Soon after "Evangeline" appeared Longfellow's final venture in prose, "Kavanagh," a story of New England village life, which Hawthorne called "a most precious and rare book, as fragrant as a bunch of flowers." But his prose was too unreal to survive; its delicacy and elegance were too obvious. The story served, however, to express

Prose Works

principles and ideals that were fundamental to his life work. "Outre-Mer," written in the manner of Irving, helped to lift the American mind out of provincialism and guide it to treasures of beauty beyond the sea. "Hyperion" is a blithe-hearted expression of noble aspiration, nurtured by romance and sentiment. "I called it *Hyperion*," he said, "because it *moves on high*, among clouds and stars." It rendered an inestimable service in introducing German poetry to the New World, and the charm of its descriptions is not yet lost, for it is the companion of the lettered traveler in Germany, as the "Marble Faun" is in Italy.

That there might be no irksome restraint upon his creative energies, he resigned his professorship in 1854, desiring the free enjoyment of what he called his "ideal home-world of poetry." Henceforth his life moved on in beautiful tranquility, broken once, in 1861, by the tragic death of his wife. The burden of this sacred sorrow he never revealed to the public; in his portfolio was found after his death the touching sonnet, "The Cross of Snow": —

Second great sorrow; "Tales of a Wayside Inn"

> Here in this room she died; and soul more white
> Never through martyrdom of fire was led
> To its repose.

Tinged as is his poetry generally with the pathos of afternoon shadows, he seldom sounds a note of personal grief, as in the tender lyric "Resignation," which beautifully enshrines a family sorrow. The

happy companionship of his children and the consolation of work were left to him. As Bryant under similar circumstances turned to Homer, Longfellow turned to his "dear Dante" and completed a translation of the "Divine Comedy," which is one of the best English versions, famous especially for its closeness to the original. Meanwhile he was beginning the "Tales of a Wayside Inn," told by a group of friends about the blazing hearth of the quaint old tavern in Sudbury. The idea is as old as Chaucer and Boccaccio, but here receives a new grace, for Longfellow was the best of modern trouvères. Among these tales are the favorites "King Robert of Sicily," "Paul Revere's Ride," and the "Birds of Killingworth," the last being the only one in which the story is of the poet's own invention.

A final visit to Europe was made in 1868, when the poet was honored with degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge. His singing voice remained unimpaired to the last; indeed increasing in depth and fullness of tone as old age approached. "Morituri Salutamus," read before the survivors of his college class, fills the soul like organ music. The "Hanging of the Crane," a charming domestic idyl, and "Keramos," the poem of the potter, are worthy companions of the "Building of the Ship." Of "Ultima Thule," published in 1880, the motto of which was from the prayer of Horace, that he might "pass an old age neither unworthy nor without song,"

Last Years

Lowell wrote, "Never was your hand firmer." His last poem, the "Bells of San Blas," was finished March 15, 1882; on Friday, March 24, the bells of Cambridge tolled the heavy news of his death. He passed from earth like the golden sun, that deepens its rich coloring until it sinks below the horizon, and fills the heavens with a glorious afterglow.

The life of Longfellow was itself a poem, gracious, tranquil, and beautiful. His escutcheon, had he possessed one, should have borne the Edelweiss. "His nature," says Lowell, "was consecrated ground, into which no unclean spirit could ever enter." Professor Norton adds, "The sweetness, the gentleness, the grace, the purity, the humanity of his verse were the image of his own soul." Innate delicacy and refinement were not more pronounced characteristics than his free-flowing sympathy. He loved his neighbor and aided him through varied forms of charity; he loved children; he loved to help young authors, struggling with first failures; and his patience with strange visitors, relic hunters, and autograph collectors was phenomenal. Not even for critics, whom he loved least of all, had he ever a bitter word. When Poe was attacking him with his gad-fly sting, he was reading and praising the poems of his envious rival. There was not a drop of acid in his nature. His soul, if not as lofty, was as generous and serene as Emerson's.

Personal Qualities

His poetry expresses the finer life of common

humanity. No poet of English speech has so endeared himself to the general heart; he is the people's poet, voicing universal emotions; his song rises like Wordsworth's lark, always "true to the kindred points of heaven and home." No preaching was ever more fruitful in the bestowal of peace and consolation than such poems as the "Psalm of Life" and "Resignation"; and "Excelsior," artistically defective and threadbare in sentiment as it may be, is still to thousands what it was to Holmes, "a poem that springs upward like a flame, and carries the soul up with it in its aspiration for the unattainable ideal." Beauty, grace, and tenderness are the marks of his power; he is never passionate, Byronic, or Browningesque. He was as sensitive to beauty as Keats, and his workmanship, directed by unerring taste and a delicate perception of harmonies, is uniformly excellent. The style is clear as crystal, and the melody is never marred by discords. There is none of Whittier's impetuous rush, or of Lowell's pungent humor. The limitations of his poetry are obvious; the themes are commonplace and the thought is not profound; but so to treat the commonplace as to make it eternally interesting and beautiful, to immortalize a "Village Blacksmith" in song, requires a high, if not the highest, order of genius. His love of romanticism, rich expression, and moral diffusiveness is restrained by a classic taste for simplicity; a fine balance of thought and expression is maintained,

Literary Qualities

which, if it sometimes produces monotony, always avoids obscurity and sensationalism. The dominant note of his song is that of the hermit thrush, whose prolonged note of sweet melancholy adds to the enchantment of forest twilight; his sadness is not the sadness that depresses, but the gentle voice of yearning that purifies and exalts. "He touches the spirit with an infinite softness, like a hand from the other world."

Longfellow has been called the "least national of our poets"; but what is thought to be national is often only provincial. Although by taste, temperament, and education he was strongly drawn toward Europe, yet he was not lacking in patriotism. His greatest poems are thoroughly native, and the "Building of the Ship," with its magnificent close, comes near to being our finest national poem. His culture was cosmopolitan; he was at home in any part of the Old World where legend, art, or song has left a shrine. If the castled Rhine inspired him as genuinely as his own Charles, our literature has been the better for it. All the world was his Hybla, from which to gather honeyed verse. There was some truth in Margaret Fuller's pert criticism upon his early poems, that he produced "flowers of all climes, and wild flowers of none." And others reproached him with being a "smooth-throated mocking bird warbling a foreign melody." But the native wood-notes came, and his pages are

Longfellow's Nationalism

often filled with the odors of pines and hemlocks. His fame confirms his early contention, in "Kavanagh," that "nationality is a good thing, to a certain extent, but universality is better." His poems are "household words" wherever the English language is spoken; in England he is read more widely than Tennyson, and the marble bust in Westminster Abbey, near the tomb of Chaucer, is a fitting symbol of his place in the Valhalla of the English race.

Longfellow sought eminence in each of the three great departments of verse, — lyric, epic, and dramatic. The power of his lyrics is attested by their extraordinary popularity. The world cannot tire of the sweet pensiveness of such songs as "The Day is Done," and "The Arrow and the Song," or of the profounder music of the "Fire of Drift-Wood," "Sandalphon," and "Palingenesis." He was not a nature poet, but the sea always inspired him. In the "Secret of the Sea" he says: —

Lyrics, Epics, Dramas

> And the heart of the great ocean
> Sends a thrilling pulse through me.

His sonnets, some of them, Lowell thought to be among "the most beautiful and perfect we have in the language." In the minor forms of the epic, the ballad and the metrical tale, he touched a point of excellence overreached in his own age only by Tennyson. Like Tennyson, he was pursued to the end by the desire to produce a dramatic masterpiece, for which his gen-

ius was not fitted. The early "Spanish Student" is his nearest approach to a play; "Judas Maccabæus" and "Michael Angelo" are interesting failures; of the elaborate trilogy, "Christus," only the second part, the "Golden Legend," compels admiration, and the abiding charm of this drama of mediævalism is quite independent of the dramatic form.

Translations

Translation forms a conspicuous part of Longfellow's work, for which he possessed a distinctive taste and happy gift. From whatever language he chose gems for recutting, he performed the delicate work with remarkable ease and accuracy. He "remained all his life a translator," says Beers, "and in subtler ways than by direct translation he infused the fine essence of European poetry into his own." Like the early engravers who made new originals from the smoky canvases of the old masters, he delighted in recreating, in forms of his own exquisite art, the life of the misty, legendary past.

Final Estimate

Longfellow is widely regarded as "the leader of the American choir," but his rank among his fellow-poets is of slight importance. He is not equal to them at many points; he did not have Emerson's spiritual breadth and insight, nor Whittier's trenchant strength, nor Lowell's versatile gifts, but as a maker of artistic verse, as a poet of the beautiful and of the human affections, his position of superiority is secure. In respect to these qualities Curtis's judgment is likely to stand: "The infinite tenderness and

patience, the pathos and the beauty of daily life, of familiar emotion, and the common scene, these are the significance of that verse whose beautiful and simple melody, softly murmuring for more than forty years, made the singer the most widely beloved of living men. . . . His poems are apples of gold in pictures of silver. There is nothing in them excessive, nothing overwrought, nothing strained into turgidity, obscurity, or nonsense. There is sometimes, indeed, a fine stateliness, as in the 'Arsenal at Springfield,' and even a resounding splendor of diction, as in 'Sandalphon.' But when the melody is most delicate, it is simple. The poet throws nothing into the mist to make it large. How purely melodious his verse can be without losing the thought or its most transparent expression, is seen in the 'Evening Star' and 'Snow-flakes.' The literary decoration of his style, the aroma and color and richness, so to speak, which it derives from his ample accomplishment in literature, are incomparable."

Class Study.—Evangeline; Psalm of Life; Village Blacksmith; Wreck of the Hesperus; Carillon; Belfry of Bruges; Old Clock on the Stairs; The Arrow and the Song; Sandalphon; Birds of Killingworth; Building of the Ship; Seaweed; Fire of Drift-Wood; The Jewish Cemetery at Newport; The Herons of Elmwood; Curfew; Three Friends of Mine; Divina Commedia; Weariness; Resignation.

Class Reading.—Hiawatha; My Lost Youth; The Children's Hour; The Cumberland; The Day is Done; King Robert of Sicily; The Bridge; The Skeleton in Armor; The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls; The Arsenal at Springfield; Killed at the Ford;

Catawba Wine; Prometheus; Castles in Spain; Birds of Passage; Hanging of the Crane; The Bells of Lynn; Christmas Bells; The Bells of San Blas.

Biography and Criticism. — Samuel Longfellow's "Henry Wadsworth Longfellow," and "Final Memorials." Underwood's "Henry Wadsworth Longfellow." Kennedy's "Henry Wadsworth Longfellow." Robertson's "Henry Wadsworth Longfellow" (Great Writers). Mrs. Fields's "Authors and Friends." Carpenter's "Longfellow" (Beacon Biographies). Stoddard's "Poets' Homes." Wolfe's "Literary Shrines." Cyclopædia of American Biography (Professor Norton). Stedman's "Poets of America." Curtis's "Literary and Social Essays." Richardson's "American Literature," Vol. II. Johnson's "Three Englishmen and Three Americans." Scudder's "Men and Letters." Winter's "Old Shrines and Ivy" and "English Rambles and Other Fugitive Pieces." Lang's "Letters on Literature." Higginson's "Old Cambridge." Whittier's "Literary Recreations." Parton's "Princes, Authors, and Statesmen." Whipple's "Essays and Reviews," Vol. I. Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Howells's "Literary Friends and Acquaintance." Stoddard's "Reminiscences" (*Lippincott's*, January, 1896). Bayard Taylor's "Essays and Notes." Hazeltine's "Chats about Books." Miss Mitford's "Recollections of a Literary Life." Wendell's "Literary History of America." Fiske's "Unseen World." Haweis's "Poets in the Pulpit."

Poets' Tributes. — William Winter's "Longfellow." Lowell's "To H. W. L." Whittier's "The Poet and the Children." Holmes's "To H. W. Longfellow," and "Our Dead Singer." H. C. Bunner's "Longfellow." Austin Dobson's "H. W. Longfellow: In Memoriam." Hayne's "Longfellow Dead!" Edith M. Thomas's "Vale et Salve." Margaret J. Preston's "Ultima Thule." E. S. Phelps's "Whose Shall the Welcome Be?" Cranch's "Longfellow."

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

1819–1891

While Longfellow is justly called the leader of the New England choir, and the most representative American poet, Lowell must be regarded as our chief man of letters. His varied eminence as poet, critic, teacher, reformer, diplomatist, gives him a peculiar preëminence not attained by any other representative of American literature.

James Russell Lowell

In the stately colonial mansion called Elmwood, one mile from the gateway of Harvard College, James Russell Lowell was born on Washington's birthday, February 22, 1819. It has been said that the Lowells were "distinguished in every generation"; for the practical wisdom of one the city of Lowell was named, and another was the philanthropic founder of the Lowell Institute. The

poet's father was a distinguished clergyman, and the mother, of Scotch descent, taught her children to love the songs and ballads of the "North Country." Elmwood was an ideal place for a poet's birth and education; within was a well-stocked library and a family life of culture and high aims; without were extensive grounds abounding in the wild beauty of native trees and flowers and singing birds. How the poet soul was nurtured here, Aldrich happily describes in the beautiful memorial "Elmwood":—

Home Influences

> So in her arms did Mother Nature fold
> Her poet, whispering what of wild and sweet
> Into his ear — the state-affairs of birds,
> The lore of dawn and sunset, what the wind
> Said in the treetops — fine, unfathomed things
> Henceforth to turn to music in his brain.

At fifteen Lowell entered Harvard, and was graduated in 1838. During his senior year he was rusticated at Concord for a time, for following the bent of his own tastes in reading, in disparagement of the prescribed tastes of the faculty. He was thus prevented from delivering his class poem, which contained nothing significant except some clever satire upon the Transcendentalists and abolitionists, with both of whom he was soon to be in active sympathy. Upon hearing of his son's appointment as class poet, Dr. Lowell exclaimed, "Oh, dear! James promised me that he would quit writing poetry and go to work." But the good doctor did not comprehend the

College

destinies that attend upon genius, and fortunately his son never lived up to the early New England ideal of thrift. He attended the Harvard Law School, obtained his degree of LL.B., and opened an office in Boston; but it is more than doubtful whether he ever had a case, in spite of his prose sketch entitled "My First Client."

In 1841 he published his first volume of poems, "A Year's Work," which contained little promise of his future powers, but gave evidence enough that henceforth literature, not law, would command his service. Most of these poems he condemned in later years, as "poor windfalls of unripe experience." One poem, "My Love," contains the key to the volume and its inspiration, "a hymn as high and still as starlight," so pure and lofty is its passion. He had won the love of Maria White, a woman of exquisite refinement and personal loveliness, whom he married in 1844. He now abandoned law, wrote for the periodicals, founded and edited a magazine called the *Pioneer*, which being too good to live, under the conditions of public taste then prevailing, died with the third number; published an interesting series of "Conversations on Some of the Old Poets," and in 1844, a second volume of poems, containing some of his best known work, as "Rhœcus," "The Shepherd of King Admetus," and "A Legend of Brittany," the last being hailed by Poe as "the noblest poem yet written by an American."

First Poems and Marriage

Under the influence of his high-souled wife, herself

a poet and an ardent sympathizer with every noble reform, Lowell was drawn into the abolition movement, and was for several years an editorial contributor to the *Antislavery Standard*. As his soul became fired with the new cause, his poetry changed from imitative and conventional verses to strains of original strength, sounding the alarum of national danger and duty. The poems on Garrison, Phillips, and Palfrey, and "The Present Crisis" mark the progress of his patriotic passion toward its splendid outburst in the "Biglow Papers." In this series of brilliant satires the unsuspected resources of his genius were suddenly disclosed. Under the guise of Hosea Biglow, a shrewd-witted down-East Yankee, the poet administered a stinging rebuke to the dominant party at the North, represented by Webster, for yielding to southern demands, especially in the matter of the Mexican War, which he regarded as "a national crime, committed in behalf of slavery." The first "paper" appeared in 1846, ridiculing the attempt to raise troops in Boston, and containing lines of fervid patriotism that rang with a startling sound: —

A Real Inspiration; The "Biglow Papers"

> Massachusetts, God forgive her,
> She's akneelin' with the rest,
> She, thet ough' to ha' clung forever
> In her grand old eagle-nest.

With clever hits and keen sarcasm, the impotence and sham of public men and events were held up

to public ridicule and indignation. The abolitionists, hitherto treated with lofty scorn, were now upon the laughing side. The democratic privilege of personal criticism had never produced such a campaign song as "What Mr. Robinson Thinks." The sober-minded Sumner, the white-plumed champion of the cause, welcomed the new knight of the Yankee pen, but wished "he could have used good English."

More "Biglow Papers"

The first series of the "Biglow Papers" appeared in volume form in 1848; a second series was written during the Civil War, containing the world-famous "Jonathan to John," a protest against England's hostile attitude. The political satire of both series is varied by frequent strains of true lyric power, and by two poems of surpassing worth. "The Courtin'," that perfect idyl of Yankee land, in the judgment of Stedman, is "without a counterpart; no richer juice can be pressed from the wild grape of Yankee soil." In "Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line" we have a delicious outpouring of Lowell's full-hearted love of nature, pictures of astonishing truth and beauty, like this of the bobolink: —

> Half hid in tip-top apple-blooms he swings,
> Or climbs aginst the breeze with quiverin' wings,
> Or, givin' way to 't in a mock despair,
> Runs down, a brook of laughter thru the air.

Political satire is generally ephemeral, however prominent may be the author, but in the "Biglow Papers" Lowell achieved a permanent masterpiece. He

rendered the Yankee dialect and character with a completeness unapproached by others, and he could well say of himself, "I know Yankee, if I know nothing else." They are, says Professor Winchester, "something unique in English poetry. The combination of such a variety of high poetic qualities in humorous verse is unprecedented. No English satiric poetry shows anything quite like it. To a satire as caustic as Pope's and a wit as dry as Butler's, they unite a broad and mellow humor, bright imagination, delicate sensibilities, deep pathos, and a power of stirring lyrical appeal."[1]

In the same year with the "Biglow Papers" appeared the "Fable for Critics" and the "Vision of Sir Launfal." The former is a series of portraits in rollicking verse, in which he touched up the characteristics of his literary compatriots with good-natured raillery and good criticism as well. "Sir Launfal" is a charming allegorical treatment of one of the legends of the Holy Grail, pervaded with delicate poetic and spiritual feeling. Nothing in his poetry is more widely familiar than the beautiful passage descriptive of spring, beginning: — "Fable for Critics"; "Sir Launfal"

And what is so rare as a day in June.

Lowell went abroad in 1851 with his family, seeking mainly the improvement of Mrs. Lowell's health. The

[1] *Review of Reviews*, October, 1891.

literary fruitage of this journey is found in the essays entitled "Leaves from My Journal in Italy and Elsewhere." At Rome the death of his little son occurred. Twice before these poet parents had been stricken by such a bereavement; from this last shock Mrs. Lowell never recovered, and the next year, 1853, she died. The memory of these sorrows is tenderly enshrined in the "Changeling," "She Came and Went," "The First Snow-Fall," "Auf Wiedersehen," "After the Burial," and "The Dead House."

Domestic Sorrow

In 1857 Lowell succeeded Longfellow in the Professorship of Modern Languages, at Harvard. In the same year occurred his second marriage, and his appointment as the first editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. For ten years from 1862 he was joint editor with Professor Norton of the *North American Review*. To these periodicals he contributed his essays, collected under the titles "Fireside Travels," "Among My Books," and "From My Study Windows." These, with a volume of "Political Essays," one of "Political and Literary Addresses," and one of lectures on "The Old English Dramatists," constitute his prose works.

Editorial Work

The complete product of Lowell's genius, in verse and prose, is comparatively small. He wrote reluctantly, needing the spur of some great cause or occasion to arouse his best creative energies. He loved to indulge in literary lotus-eating, feasting his intellect, ripening and mellowing his thought through continued

converse with other minds. When expression came, it was the choicest essence, distilled from the lavish abundance of his knowledge. "My eggs take long in hatching," he says in a letter, "because I need to brood a good while." Twenty years had elapsed since the publication of a collection of his poems, when, in 1869, "Under the Willows" appeared, containing many of his most precious gems, such as the pastoral title poem, the charming "Winter Evening Hymn to My Fire," with its touching close, "Auf Wiedersehen" and its "Palinode," the subtile "Foot-Path," and the exquisite fantasy "In the Twilight." The same year brought forth "The Cathedral," a stately poem in blank verse with magnificent passages, but marred in places by characteristic discords, unworthily admitted to so dignified a composition. A final collection, "Heartsease and Rue," 1888, opened with the memorial poem "Agassiz," which "takes its place," says Henry James, "with the few great elegies in our language, gives a hand to 'Lycidas' and 'Thyrsis.'"

Intellectual Characteristics; "Under the Willows"

Lowell's most exalted verse is in his four patriotic odes, which Underwood calls "an Alpine group." The greatest is the "Commemoration Ode," in memory of the sons of Harvard who perished in the Civil War. Into this sublime song of victory and peace the poet poured his warm heart blood. Eight of his own kindred were numbered among the heroes to be memorialized. American patriotism has

"Commemoration Ode"

offered no loftier tribute to Abraham Lincoln than the passage beginning: —

> Such was he, our Martyr-chief,
> Whom late the nation he had led,
> With ashes on her head,
> Wept with the passion of an angry grief.

The strophes are of unequal merit, and sometimes overburdened with compressed thought. "It is no smooth-cut block from Pentelicus," says Stedman, "but a mass of rugged quartz, beautified with prismatic crystals, and deep veined here and there with virgin gold."

Lowell was appointed, in 1876, minister to Spain, and four years later was transferred to England, where he was welcomed as "His Excellency the Ambassador of American Literature to the Court of Shakspere." No American ever enjoyed a more gracious and distinguished reception among the English people, whose unbounded admiration he won through a wise administration of his official trust, an engaging personality, and an extraordinary felicity in public speaking. The Queen said that no ambassador during her reign had created so much interest in England. With an increasing affection for England, he maintained always an intense, almost aggressive Americanism, and his address at Birmingham on "Democracy" stands as our finest expression of American principles. At the close of his public career he returned to Elmwood and there spent his

Diplomatic Honors

last days, listening in the quiet of the old library to the voices of the past.

Again he watched
His loved syringa whitening by the door,
And knew the catbird's welcome.

Lowell's Home, Elmwood

And here he died, August 12, 1891, and in Mt. Auburn he rests near Longfellow.

The life of Lowell presents a type of cultivated manhood that should be an inspiration to every American. It is the best product of republican culture. It shows what breadth and beauty and richness of life may be attained by the application to life of high ideals. Viewing his character as an

author, one is first impressed by the extent and variety of his powers.

> With such a large range as from the ale-house bench
> Can reach the stars and be at home with both.

From a campaign song in dialect to a learned essay on Dante, an elegant exchange of compliments with royalty, or a poem expressing the profoundest experiences of the soul, he could pass with equal and masterly ease; and with this splendid resourcefulness was always the quality of freshness and genuineness, a perennial youthfulness of tone. Allied to this is the out-of-door atmosphere of his work. From youth to old age he was a lover of nature, especially of the fresh, joyous, odorous spring; his finest thought rose with the "high tide" of June, as Chaucer's inspiration was caught from May. Nothing in the literature of birdlore is more truly delicious than the description of his intimacies with feathered friends in "My Garden Acquaintance."

Personal and Literary Qualities

Humor fills his writing like sunshine. The allegro element of his genius is always breaking out in "quips and cranks and wanton wiles," even sometimes at the expense of taste, as when the organ music of the "Cathedral" is interrupted by a pun. This irrepressible impulse of humor, always sweet and wholesome, gives a fascinating interest to his "Letters," which must be reckoned permanently among his prose works. Moreover, all his prose is

Humor and Thought

"aerated by wit." His shafts are keen, but never poisoned. "There is not one touch of cynicism," declares Howells, "in all that he has written; and for this reason, as a satirist, he stands not only foremost, but alone in our language." Quite as characteristic, however, as his wit and humor, is the background or contrast of serious thought. His fancy plays upon the surface of deep waters. Both verse and prose are heavily freighted with the rich stores of scholarship and thinking, and for this reason Lowell can never be popular in the sense that Irving and Longfellow are popular. Moreover, his thinking, while it elucidates, never perverts or distorts fundamental truth. In respect to religion, he does not hesitate to express his conservative distrust of the radical tendency of the age, with its knife and glass —

> That make thought physical and thrust far off
> The Heaven, so neighborly with man of old.

The critical essays — on Dante, Shakspere, Spenser, Dryden, Chaucer, Milton, and other themes — stand at the head of critical writing in America. They are not easy reading, and to read them appreciatively is the mark of a liberal education. He seeks to impress the reader just as he is impressed by his subject, and the reader who can receive the full impression is in a way to enjoy the choicest literary luxury. He does not aim to methodize or exhaust, but to illuminate his theme. He is not

Critical Essays; Prose style

coldly judicial like Matthew Arnold, but warmly appreciative, enticing the reader into his own enjoyments by a delightful companionableness that is more persuasive than any logic of critical principles. The amplitude of learning is sometimes bewildering, and the rapid prismatic flashings of new thoughts are followed with a kind of breathless despair. The richness of expression is often an embarrassment, it is so prodigal and profuse; the sentences are packed with meaning, the humor evasive, the language learned, the allusions bookish and remote. Yet there is no pedantry. He scatters wise and witty epigrams up and down his pages, like one who sows from the sack instead of from the hand; his style is diffusive, uneven, at times running to waywardness and caprice. But objections have little force in the presence of such scholarly ease, and such a gracious and winning personality. He merely exercises the right of genius to be natural, without regard for the law.

Lowell's poetic qualities are well summarized by Bayard Taylor. "No one of our poets shows a richer or wider range of thought; no one a greater variety of expression in verse. But whatever form his Muse may select, it is the individuality of an intellect rather than that of a literary artist which she represents. The reader is never beguiled by studied graces of rhythm; but on the other hand, he is constantly refreshed and stimulated by sudden glimpses of heights and splendors of thought which

Qualities of his Verse

seem to be revealed as much to the poet as to himself. Lowell rises with a swift wing, and can upbear himself, when he pleases, on a steady one; but his nature seems hostile to that quality which compels each conception to shape itself into clear symmetry, and which, therefore, limits the willful exercise of the imagination. He seems to write under a strong stress of natural inspiration, then to shrink from the cooler-blooded labor of revision, and the adjustment of the rhythmical expression to the informing thought. Hence he is frequently unequal, not alone in separate poems, but also in different portions of the same poem. This is much more evident, however, in his earlier than in his later verse. Such poems as 'In the Twilight,' 'The Washers of the Shroud,' 'To the Muse,' and the greater part of the 'Commemoration Ode,' are alike perfect and noble."

Lowell might have achieved higher distinction had he limited himself to one of the several forms of art in which he worked with facile ease. "But the very multiplicity of his endowments," says Professor Norton, "interfered with the complete expression of any one of them. His talents hampered his genius." There is enough of immutable worth, however, in his best work, to secure its permanent place among the classics of our language. The final judgment of his readers must be in essential accord with that of Henry James: "There is nothing ineffective in his name and fame — they stand for

His Achievement

large and delightful things. He is one of the happy figures in literature. He had his trammels and his sorrows, but he drank deep of the tonic draught, and he will long count as an erect fighting figure on the side of optimism and beauty. He was strong without narrowness, wise without bitterness, and glad without fatuity."

Class Study. — *Poetry:* The Vision of Sir Launfal; An Indian-Summer Reverie; To the Dandelion; Under the Willows; The First Snow-Fall; The Shepherd of King Admetus; The Courtin'; The Present Crisis; The Nest; In the Twilight; The Commemoration Ode.

Prose: My Garden Acquaintance; A Good Word for Winter.

Class Reading. — *Poetry:* Under the Old Elm; Auf Wiedersehen; A Winter Evening Hymn to My Fire; The Changeling; Beaver Brook; For an Autograph; Al Fresco; Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line; Pictures from Appledore; Phœbe; The Cathedral.

Prose: On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners; Chaucer; Democracy.

Biography and Criticism. — Scudder's "James Russell Lowell." Underwood's "James Russell Lowell: a Biographical Sketch," and "The Poet and the Man: Recollections and Appreciations of James Russell Lowell." "Letters of James Russell Lowell," edited by Norton. Edward Everett Hale's "Lowell and his Friends." Brown's "Life of James Russell Lowell." Edward Everett Hale, Jr.'s "James Russell Lowell" (Beacon Biographies). Wolfe's "Literary Shrines." Stedman's "Poets of America." Curtis's "Orations and Addresses," Vol. III. Woodberry's "Makers of Literature." James's "Essays in London." Richardson's "American Literature." Higginson's "Old Cambridge." Whipple's "Outlooks on Society." Howells's "Literary Friends and Acquaintance." Taylor's "Essays and Notes." William

Watson's "Excursions in Criticism." Wendell's "Stelligeri," and "Literary History of America." Carpenter's "American Prose" (Norton). Haweis's "American Humorists." Wilkinson's "Free Lance in the Field of Life and Letters." Cheney's "That Dome in Air." Underwood's "Builders of American Literature."

Poets' Tributes. — Longfellow's "Herons of Elmwood." Aldrich's "Elmwood." Whittier's "A Welcome to Lowell." Holmes's "Farewell to J. R. Lowell"; "At a Birthday Festival"; "To James Russell Lowell"; and "James Russell Lowell." Margaret J. Preston's "Home-Welcome to Lowell." Richard Watson Gilder's "Lowell." Cranch's "To J. R. L. on his Fiftieth Birthday," and "To J. R. L. on his Homeward Voyage."

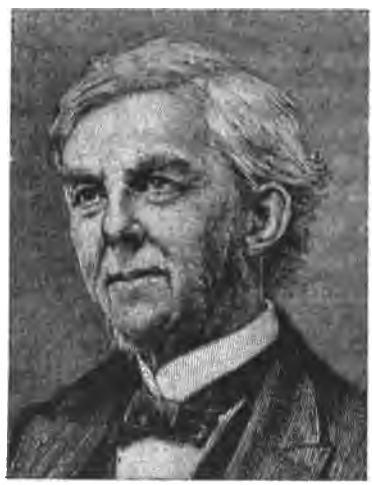
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

1809–1894

The last survivor of the Cambridge trio, and of the grand New England group, was Oliver Wendell Holmes. One after another he bade each of his distinguished fellows farewell, and himself lived on to fulfill the playful augury of his early poem, "The Last Leaf."

The father of Dr. Holmes was the Rev. Abiel Holmes, a minister of the strict Calvinist type, who "apart from his religious creed was a gentleman of humanity and cultivation." Like many of his clerical ancestors, he had a weakness for writing verses, and his "Annals of America" is still a useful historical work. The mother, Sarah Wendell, a pleasing and vivacious woman, was a lineal descendant of the "tenth muse," Anne Bradstreet; **Ancestry and Home**

and his great-grandmother was Dorothy Quincy, whose portrait is celebrated in "Dorothy Q." The Holmes family was of the choicest New England stock, the Puritan aristocracy, which the poet himself styled "the Brahmin Caste." On the margin of the family almanac for the year 1809, against the date August 29, stands the record of the poet's birth, "son *b.*" The birthplace, and for many years the home, was the "old gambrel-roofed house" in Cambridge, famous for its Revolutionary associations; his childhood experience here is often affectionately recalled in his writings; here he received his first impulse toward literature in a liberally selected library, where, as he says, he "bumped about among books from the time when he was hardly taller than one of his father's or grandfather's folios."



Oliver Wendell Holmes

He prepared for college at Phillips Academy, Andover, and was graduated from Harvard in "the

famous class of '29," in celebration of the good fellowship of which he wrote many of his cleverest poems. Among his classmates were the distinguished clergymen, James Freeman Clarke, and Samuel F. Smith, the author of "America." For a year after graduation he studied law, and during that time, he says, "first tasted the intoxicating pleasures of authorship." He wrote for a college periodical, and from this first "lead poisoning," caused by "mental contact with type metal," fortunately for the world, he never fully recovered. One poem published at this time brought him swiftly to fame. He read in a newspaper that the old frigate *Constitution* had been condemned by the government, and with an impulse of patriotic indignation wrote the impetuous lyric "Old Ironsides."

College; First Taste of Fame

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!

The ringing protest was copied in all the papers, quoted in speeches, and distributed as a handbill on the streets, until public sentiment was aroused and the old ship was saved.

For no very definite reason, law was abandoned for medicine, and two years and a half were spent in Paris in earnest and enthusiastic study. In 1836 the well-equipped young doctor began his practice in Boston, but accomplished little more than a beginning; his professional success was to be won as a teacher rather than as a practitioner. A doctor's duties proved

to be not altogether to his taste, and moreover, his growing reputation as a wit and poet made against his reputation as a sober physician. He was "mightily pleased" therefore by the appointment in 1838 to a professorship of anatomy in Dartmouth College; in 1847 he was called to a similar professorship in the Medical School at Harvard, a position which he held for thirty-five years. Few instructors ever succeeded so well in making the dry subject of anatomy interesting; he brought to it plentiful knowledge, patience, and earnestness, and an easy flowing abundance of apt and witty illustration, that added effectiveness as well as interest to his instruction. He also made some valuable contributions to medical science, and his works include a volume of "Medical Essays," in which are the two celebrated papers against Homeopathy a subject that "led him in his earnestness," says his biographer, "to utter some of the happiest of his brilliant sentences, however distasteful they may be to some readers."

Doctor and Professor

From the outset the practice of poetry went hand in hand with the practice of his profession. During his first year in a doctor's chaise, our jolly physician published a volume of exuberant and witty verses, among them being "The Last Leaf," a poem which Abraham Lincoln found "inexpressibly touching," and probably unsurpassed for tender mingling of humor and pathos. He was drawn into the "lecture lyceum" of the period,

"The Last Leaf"; "Lecture-peddling"

and his experiences in "lecture-peddling," happily described in the "Autocrat," were not entirely agreeable, but were in a sense a necessity; for in 1840 he had married "the kindest, tenderest, and gentlest of women," and the home now established in Boston had to be sustained by his wits. Of his three children, the only survivor, now a judge of the Supreme Court, was the wounded hero of the essay, "My Hunt after the Captain."

When the *Atlantic Monthly* was established in 1857, Lowell accepted the editorship on condition that Dr. Holmes should be "the first contributor to be engaged." Thus it happened that he was awakened by Lowell, he says, "from a kind of literary lethargy"; and it was an auspicious awakening. He gave to the new magazine its name and its first fame. The "Autocrat" Series In the first number appeared the opening installment of the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," with its droll beginning, "I was just going to say, when I was interrupted." The interruption had been just a quarter of a century, for in 1832 he had contributed two papers to the *New England Magazine* under the same felicitous title. These he regarded as the "crude products of his uncombed literary boyhood," but they suggested the thought "that it would be a curious experiment to shake the same bough again and see if the ripe fruit were better or worse than the early windfalls." The fruit proved to be thoroughly ripe, juicy and delicious, and people of taste

are still feasting upon it. The "Autocrat" was followed by the "Professor at the Breakfast Table," and to this succeeded, twelve years later, the "Poet at the Breakfast Table." The character sketches, bright dialogue, and imaginative passages in these papers suggested the possibility of a complete novel; readers were, therefore, not surprised by the appearance of two delightful stories, "Elsie Venner," 1861, and "The Guardian Angel," 1867. Twenty years later he wrote a third novel, "A Mortal Antipathy," which is much inferior to the others.

Holmes always drove a double team of prose and verse. In the same year with "Elsie Venner" he published "Songs in Many Keys," and in 1874, "Songs of Many Seasons." The occasion of his seventieth birthday was made memorable by a "Breakfast" given in his honor by the publishers of the *Atlantic*, at which nearly all of the eminent representatives of American letters were present. For this event Holmes wrote "The Iron Gate," a cheerful description of old age: —

Autumn Fruits

> I come not here your morning hour to sadden,
> A limping pilgrim, leaning on his staff, —
> I, who have never deemed it sin to gladden
> This vale of sorrows with a wholesome laugh.

He had now reached the scriptural limit, but his old age was marvelously youthful. Five years later Burroughs wrote of him truly: "May is in his heart, and early autumn in his brain." He resigned his profes-

sorship in 1882, and soon after published the gracious and sympathetic "Life of Emerson." In 1886 he made a visit to Europe with his daughter, which, in his biographer's words, "was in reality a triumphal tour; he was overwhelmed with attentions, so that it was only by extreme care that he extricated himself alive from the hospitalities of his British friends." Degrees were conferred upon him by the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh. The record of this flattering experience is given in "Our Hundred Days in Europe."

Once more, in 1889, the Autocrat, now in his eightieth year, shook the old bough, and a series of cheerful, chatty papers, happily christened "Over the Tea-cups," appeared in the *Atlantic*. Although, as he knew, he could not make his "evening tea-cups as much of a success as his morning coffee-cups," yet there is the familiar play of the old-time wit and wisdom. A last volume of poems was put forth with the appropriate title "Before the Curfew," like Longfellow's "In the Harbor," and Whittier's "At Sundown." Slowly and gently the frost of age settled upon him, until the "last leaf" fell, October 7, 1894.

Few men of letters have been so lovable and so beloved as Dr. Holmes, and largely because few have revealed so frankly and fully their personalities in their writings. His books are a continuous autobiography; he was always "a Boswell writing out himself." The little egoisms and vanities

Personality

that necessarily accompany such self-revelation serve only to make him the more human and approachable. He loved praise and believed in its virtues. "I purr very loud over a good, honest letter that says pretty things of me," remarks the Autocrat. He was the prince of talkers, and in that notable galaxy of writers who sat about the table of the "Saturday Club," he was easily the brightest star. "Perhaps no man of modern times," says Edmund Gosse, "has given his contemporaries a more extraordinary impression of wit in conversation." Aldrich hails him as:—

> Our Yankee Tsar, our Autocrat
> Of all the happy realms of wit.

Provincial he was, proudly and avowedly. The New England flavor is in all his work. To him Boston was "the hub of the universe," and for everything within sight of the State House dome he exhibited a kind of cockneyish devotion. He was the laureate of his city and university, and for nearly a half century a public event seldom occurred in either without being graced by the presence of his sprightly Muse. Indeed his easy acceptance of this civic and social responsibility marks the chief limitation of his poetry, as he at times perhaps realized.

> I'm a florist in verse, and what would people say
> If I came to a banquet without my bouquet?

Although Dr. Holmes is inevitably thought of as a humorist, "A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent

fancy," there was a sober side of his nature and a serious purpose in his work. "Outside I laugh," he once remarked to a friend, "inside I never laugh. It is impossible. The world is too sad." Here is the true humorist, the humorist who laughs with the world and not at it, whose laughter and tears spring from a common source in a tender, sympathetic heart. With all his ebullient spirits, he could not escape entirely the inheritance of the preacher; even in his wittiest writing he manages to administer his little moral, delicately sugar coated, but wholesome and purifying. It was his desire, he says, "to leave the world a little more human than if I had not lived." In social and political matters he was conservative. Of all the New England group he was least influenced by the enthusiasms of the period; the Transcendentalists did not affect him — except to laughter, and the abolitionists reproached him in vain for his indifference. But he was not wanting in patriotism, and when the crisis came, in such lyrics as the "Voice of the Loyal North," "God Save the Flag," "Never or Now," his voice rang as clear, if not as loud, as Whittier's. In religion he was radical, and his habit of rattling the dry bones of Puritan theology would be monotonous were it not for the entertaining display of wit and logic that always accompanies the process. Creeds and dogmas he could not abide, but he was a faithful church-goer. "There is a little plant called *Reverence* in the corner of my soul's garden,

Humor, Conservatism, Patriotism, Piety

which I love to have watered about once a week." Such was the gentle Autocrat's piety.

Dr. Holmes will always be known in literature as the "Autocrat." By the three volumes of that series his literary reputation was chiefly made, and in them it will live. He created an essentially new prose form, a conversational monologue interspersed with poetry, a kind of dramatized essay. The Autocrat presides at a boarding-house table and entertains his fellow-boarders with witty and wise comment upon subjects that follow each other in a delightfully haphazard sequence. It is table-talk of the rarest and richest kind. "The index of the Autocrat is itself a unique work," says Curtis. "It reveals the whimsical discursiveness of the book; the restless hovering of that brilliant talk over every topic, fancy, feeling, fact; a humming-bird sipping the one honeyed drop from every flower; or a huma, to use its own droll and capital symbol of the lyceum lecturer, the bird that never lights. There are few books that leave more distinctly the impression of a mind teeming with riches of many kinds." The style is easy and colloquial, keeping time with the topic, but never careless or commonplace. In all of Dr. Holmes's prose there is a "brisk and crisp and sparkling charm." His scientific training is shown in his similes and metaphors, and in his accurate observation and precise expression. He is always clear, logical, and definite. A few excerpts will illustrate the Autocrat's manner: —

The Autocrat's Prose

Put not your trust in money, but put your money in trust.

Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used till they are seasoned.

Good feeling helps society to make liars of most of us — not absolute liars, but such careless handlers of truth that its sharp corners get terribly rounded.

The clergy rarely hear any sermons except what they preach themselves. A dull preacher might be conceived, therefore, to lapse into a state of *quasi* heathenism, simply for want of religious instruction.

Every poem has a soul and a body, and it is the body of it, or the copy, that men read and publishers pay for. The soul of it is born in an instant in the poet's soul. It comes to him a thought, tangled in the meshes of a few sweet words — words that have loved each other from the cradle of the language, but have never been wedded until now.

Possibilities, Sir? — said the divinity-student; — can't a man who says *Haöw?* arrive at distinction?

Sir, — I replied, — in a republic all things are possible. But the man *with a future* has almost of necessity sense enough to see that any odious trick of speech or manners must be got rid of.

Do you want an image of the human will, or the self-determining principle, as compared with its prearranged and impassible restrictions? A drop of water, imprisoned in a crystal; you may see such a one in any mineralogical collection. One little fluid particle in the crystalline prism of the solid universe!

Ah me! what strains and strophes of unwritten verse pulsate through my soul when I open a certain closet in the ancient house where I was born! On its shelves used to lie bundles of sweet-marjoram and pennyroyal and lavender and mint and catnip; there apples were stored until their seeds should grow black, which happy period there were sharp little milk-teeth always ready to anticipate; there peaches lay in the dark, thinking of the sunshine they had lost, until, like the hearts of saints that dream of heaven in their sorrow, they grow fragrant as the breath of angels. The odorous echo of a score of dead summers lingers yet in those dim recesses.

The three novels all deal with Dr. Holmes's favorite theme, — the doctrine of heredity and its bearing upon free will and moral accountability. The prominence of the psycho-physiological element led some one to call them "medicated novels." The chief literary interest is in the New England environment of the stories. "Elsie Venner" still exercises its fascinating, somewhat uncanny, influence over many readers, and the "Guardian Angel," in Richardson's judgment, "narrowly escapes being a great novel." But Holmes has not the art of the story-teller; he is too discursive, being tempted by his scurrying thoughts away from the tale into every attractive side-path of comment and speculation. He cannot suppress himself, and hence is usually the most interesting character in the book. "On the whole," concludes Stedman, "the novels and the Autocrat volumes were indigenous works, in plot and style behind the deft creations of our day, but with their writer's acumen everywhere conspicuous."

The Novels

As a poet of occasion, Holmes was without a peer. His marvelous facility never failed him. A pertinent topic was always ready, and treated with telling aptness and pungent wit. His resources for happy similes and anecdotes, verbal drolleries, frolicsome puns, quaint analogies, and brilliant epigrams seemed inexhaustible. Age could not wither him nor custom stale his infinite variety. Lowell neatly figures this profuseness of wit as "Holmes's rockets," that—

Curve their long ellipse,
And burst in seeds of fire that burst again
To drop in scintillating rain.

But poetry written to order for an occasion is perishable, and much of Holmes's wittiest verse has, for this reason, a frail hold upon immortality. His finest qualities are represented by the lofty beauty of the "Chambered Nautilus," the playful tenderness of the "Last Leaf," and the delicious humor of the "Deacon's Masterpiece," and in such poems as these his fame will live. In poetic style he was conservative, holding to the old-fashioned models. His favorite form is the Augustan couplet, which with loving care he attunes and modulates to suit his lively fancy. His verse always possesses the eighteenth-century clarity, precision, and finish; there is no subtlety of thought in it, and no sensuous delight in mere melody; but within the limits prescribed by his taste his rhythms are perfect in form and sound.

Poetic Limitations

The most conspicuous fact about Dr. Holmes is his versatility. Few men reach so high a degree of merit in so many directions. He was poet, essayist, novelist, wit, humorist, medical writer, and college lecturer. During his lifetime he was perhaps most often thought of as an after-dinner poet, and for the poetry of occasion he "always had the essential lightness of touch and the right mingling of wit and sentiment," says Lodge. "But he was very much more than a writer of occasional

Versatile Mind and kindly Heart

verse, and his extraordinary success in this direction has tended to obscure his much higher successes, and to cause men to overlook the fact that he was a true poet in the best sense." We can be sure that he was not always satisfied himself with the pretty "blossoms" with which he decorated so many occasions: —

> To me more fair
> The buds of song that never blow.

Much of his serious nature flowed out in airy mockery of folly, sham, and wrong; but "with all his power of ridicule," says Leslie Stephen, "Holmes had not a touch of the satirist about him. He shrinks from painting even his enemies in too black colors. He can denounce bigotry; but he always prefers to point out that the bigot in theory may be the kindliest of men in practice. He is one of the writers who are destined to live long — longer, it may be, than some of greater intellectual force and higher imagination, because he succeeds so admirably in flavoring the milk of human kindness with an element which is not acid, and yet gets rid of the mawkishness which sometimes makes good morality terribly insipid."

Class Study. — *Poetry:* Old Ironsides; The Last Leaf; The Chambered Nautilus; The Voiceless; The Crooked Footpath; Union and Liberty; God Save the Flag; Contentment; The Deacon's Masterpiece; Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle; The Boys: The Living Temple; The Iron Gate.

Prose: The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.

Class Reading. — *Poetry:* A Ballad of the Boston Tea-Party; Aunt Tabitha; Dorothy Q.; Homesick in Heaven; The

Prologue; The Broomstick Train; The Schoolboy; Under the Violets; The Height of the Ridiculous; Brother Jonathan's Lament for Sister Caroline; Never or Now; Parson Turell's Legacy; Epilogue to the Breakfast Table Series.

Prose: My Hunt after the Captain; Elsie Venner; Over the Teacups.

Biography and Criticism. — Morse's "Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes." Kennedy's "Oliver Wendell Holmes." Brown's "Life of Oliver Wendell Holmes." Mrs. Fields's "Authors and Friends." Jerrold's "Oliver Wendell Holmes" (Dilettante Library). Mrs. Phelps-Ward's "Chapters from a Life." Stoddard's "American Poets and Their Homes." Gilman's "Poets' Homes." Autobiographic Reminiscences in "Pages from an Old Volume of Life"; "The New Portfolio"; and the poem "The Schoolboy." Stedman's "Poets of America." Curtis's "Literary and Social Essays." Lodge's "Certain Accepted Heroes, and Other Essays." Richardson's "American Literature," Vol. I, chap. 10; Vol. II, chap. 6. Leslie Stephen's "Studies of a Biographer," Vol. II. Higginson's "Old Cambridge." Whipple's "American Literature." Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Howells's "Literary Friends and Acquaintance." Wendell's "Literary History of America." Smalley's "Studies of Men." Carpenter's "American Prose." Whittier's "Literary Recreations."

Poets' Tributes. — Whittier's "Our Autocrat," and "To Oliver Wendell Holmes." Aldrich's "The Sailing of the Autocrat." Lowell's "To O. W. H. on his 75th Birthday." Edmund Gosse's "Letter to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes on his 75th Birthday." Gilder's "August 29, 1809." Bret Harte's "Our Laureate." Mrs. Dorr's "O. W. H." Helen Hunt Jackson's "To Oliver Wendell Holmes on his 70th Birthday." Trowbridge's "Filling an Order." Stedman's "Ergo Iris." Winter's "Oliver Wendell Holmes; or the Chieftain." Lucy Larcom's "O. W. H." Cranch's "To Oliver Wendell Holmes."

CHAPTER VII

LITERATURE IN THE SOUTH

One of the most interesting features of our national progress is the rapid development in recent years of literature in the South. A "new South" has arisen since the Civil War, with new impulses and new ideals. Sectionalism has given way to national interests and sympathies. Much that was picturesque and beautiful under the old régime has disappeared forever, and sons of the last generation, like Joel Chandler Harris, cannot but look back with tender emotions to "the dear remembered days." But tears of regret soon vanish in the warm flush of a new energy put forth to bring the life of the South into closer touch with the life of the nation and of the world. Of this new, hopeful, aspiring South the Southern poet, Maurice Thompson, sings: —

The New South

> The South whose gaze is cast
> No more upon the past,
> But whose bright eyes the skies of promise sweep,
> Whose feet in paths of progress swiftly leap;
> And whose fresh thoughts, like cheerful rivers run,
> Through odorous ways to meet the morning sun!

Before the Civil War the conditions of the South were unfavorable for literary production. King Cot-

ton did not invite the poets to his court. There was no large reading public to encourage and support genius, there were no large publishing houses, and no large centers of intellectual influence like some of the Northern cities. There was literary taste and culture in many of the isolated families on the great plantations, but it was unproductive, conservative, and in complete vassalage to England, held in complacent submission by the rules of Pope and Addison's school. The active intellectual forces were engaged with the problems engendered by slavery, and talent was attracted to politics and oratory; men of gifts and ambition became lawyers and statesmen. Moreover, to devote oneself to the service of the muses was regarded as an unmanly occupation, hence imaginative literature suffered from the disparagement of a mild contempt. Simms, the novelist, complained bitterly of social neglect incurred by his choice of literature as a profession. Longstreet, the author of "Georgia Scenes," one of the raciest volumes of local sketches in our literature, made strenuous efforts to suppress his book after its publication, and Richard Henry Wilde, lawyer and member of Congress, could not be induced to acknowledge his authorship of the beautiful little lyric, "My Life is like the Summer Rose," until it was being claimed by others. It should be said, however, that nowhere in the United States, in those days, was literature so highly valued as to justify, to prac-

Conditions unfavorable to Literature

ing high hopes in the hearts of younger men, like Hayne and Timrod, who possessed the true poetic gift. At "Woodlands," his beautiful country home, he dispensed a liberal old-time hospitality, entertaining royally all who came in the name and fellowship of letters. As a stanch pioneer and patron, inspiriting, nurturing by his enthusiasm the frail beginnings of a literature, Simms exerted an influence for which his name, if not his books, should long be held in honor.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

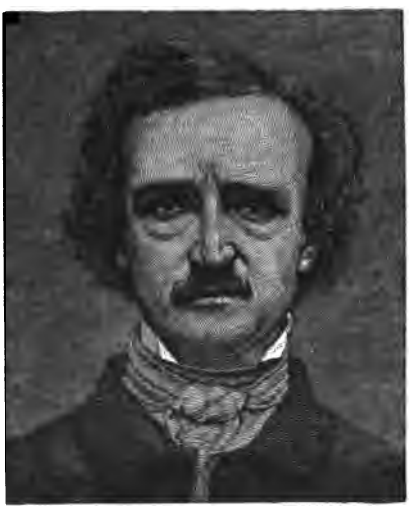
1809–1849

The most important influence emanating from these literary strivings of the South, strong, permanent, and far-reaching, was the work of Edgar Allan Poe, a strange and solitary figure in American literature. Though not a full-born son of the South, in natural temperament and in the tone and coloring of his writing he was thoroughly Southern.

Edgar Poe, grandson of David Poe, a Revolutionary patriot and founder of the family in Maryland, was born in Boston, January 19, 1809. The father had married an English actress in 1805, adopted her profession, and thereby alienated himself from his family. In 1811, owing to the illness of Mrs. Poe, the strolling family became objects of charity in Richmond, and a benefit was given them, the advertisement being addressed "To

A Life beginning in Misfortune

the Humane." A few days later the mother died leaving three children, — William, Edgar, and Rosalie; of the father nothing further is known. The bright and attractive child Edgar was adopted by Mr. John Allan, a wealthy tobacco merchant, in whose household his boyhood was spent in luxury, indulgence, and flattery. At six he could read, sing, dance, and recite passages from the great poets "in a sweet voice and with clear enunciation." Another early accomplishment, of evil portent, was to stand in a chair and pledge the guests at table "right roguishly" in a glass of wine.



Edgar Allan Poe

The Allans went to England in 1815 and for about five years Edgar attended school at Stoke Newington, near London, spending vacations in travel with his foster parents. Here he showed a "scholarly spirit," learned to speak French and read Latin, and for one

of his years acquired a wide knowledge of history and literature. Dr. Bransby, the parson-teacher, remembered that he "liked him," and that his parents "spoiled him" with pocket money. Recollections of this school were woven into the romance, "William Wilson." Returning to Richmond, he studied with good teachers, attracted attention for his cleverness in verse making, and became foremost in athletic sports, performing feats of swimming equal to those of Byron. In 1826 he entered the University of Virginia, established a reputation for scholarship, and won highest honors in Latin and French. But he also made a reputation for drinking and gambling, the common vices of the period, indulging with a "peculiar recklessness," which however was "indicative of excitable temperament rather than pleasure in his cups or cards." Mr. Allan learning of his large gambling debts refused to honor them, removed him from college before the end of the first year, and placed him in his own counting-room. An impulsive and willful disposition, pampered by long indulgence, could not be suddenly disciplined into stable habits by this treatment; not strangely, therefore, the high-spirited young poet broke the parental tie, went to Boston in search of his fortune, and enlisted in the regular army. After two years of service, with promotion to the rank of Sergeant Major, a reconciliation with Mr. Allan was effected and an appointment obtained at West Point. Less than a year of this scholastic mili-

Education

Military Experience

tarism was enough for his restless spirit, and, as he was not permitted to resign, expulsion was brought about by means of his own devising. This caused the final break with his foster father, and Poe was now launched upon his career of literary adventure, poverty, suffering, and despair. At West Point as elsewhere he had distinguished himself by singularities of mind and habits, brilliant intellectual powers, and "a wonderful aptitude for mathematics," and as "a devourer of books" with a "wayward and capricious temper."

During this military trifling the poetic desire had been stirring within him. At Boston, in 1827, he managed to publish a thin volume of Byronic imitations, entitled "Tamerlane, and Other Poems," containing little or no suggestion of his future style. Two years later "Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems" appeared at Baltimore. In 1831 he published at New York a third volume entitled simply "Poems," apparently with subscriptions obtained from the cadets on leaving West Point, who looked for interesting local squibs in the volume. But his poetic art was always treated seriously by Poe, almost sacredly. The volume contained only revised versions of the old poems, with a few new ones, among them two of his choicest lyrics — "To Helen" and the first draft of the exquisite "Israfel," which Woodberry calls the "first pure song of the poet, the notes most clear and liquid and soaring of all he ever sang."

First Volumes of Poetry

The outcast now found a home in Baltimore with an aunt, Mrs. Clemm, whose daughter Virginia became his wife. In 1833 he won a prize of one hundred dollars, offered by a Baltimore literary journal, with the story "A MS. Found in a Bottle." One of the judges was John P. Kennedy, to whom for friendly aid at this time Poe declared himself to be indebted "for life itself." "I found him," wrote, Kennedy in his diary, "in a state of starvation. I gave him clothing, free access to my table, and the use of a horse for exercise whenever he chose; in fact, brought him up from the very verge of despair." Through Kennedy's assistance Poe obtained the editorship of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, which under his able management became one of the leading magazines of the country. In the heyday of success he lost this position, probably through irregular habits.

First Prose Work

The next six years Poe spent mainly in Philadelphia, a hackwriter for booksellers, magazines, and "annuals," editing for a time *The Gentleman's Magazine* and *Graham's Magazine*. In 1839 he published a collection of his magazine stories, "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," a title descriptive of the two extremes of his method in fiction. In 1844 he moved to New York, edited the *Broadway Journal*, and was associated with Willis on the *Evening Mirror*, in which in 1845 "The Raven" appeared, making him for the hour the most famous literary man in America. Prosperity

Editorial Labor; Sorrow; Despair

was now within reach. But "unmerciful disaster," like an avenging spirit, through his whole career "followed fast and followed faster." His health was prematurely shattered by overwork, by poverty, and by intemperance, against which he struggled, manfully at times, but always in a losing fight. In the little cottage at Fordham, in most pitiable destitution, he watched at the deathbed of his child wife, Virginia, his "Ulalume," whom he worshiped with devoted love, a love beautifully symbolized in "Eleonora." For years he had seen the life of this frail wife ebbing away and when her delicate spirit passed

To the Lethean peace of the skies,

the hope of his own soul was gone. Two years longer he kept up the contest with his evil destiny, and then in an hour of supreme expectation yielded to the final triumph of the demon in the cup. He died October 7, 1849, in a hospital in Baltimore, whither he had been carried from the street in a state of unconsciousness.

A memorial tablet in the New York Museum of Art bears this inscription: "He was great in his genius, unhappy in his life, wretched in his death, but in his fame he is immortal."

The evil genius that attended Poe through life has ruthlessly pursued his memory. Few poets have ever suffered so cruelly from the prejudice and scorn of their own countrymen. His first biographer, Griswold, wrote an infamous book whose poison has been effec-

tive for nearly half a century; his last and most competent biographer, Professor Woodberry, is moved from a calm judicial poise neither by sympathy nor by charity. In a single sentence Poe described himself: "My life has been whim — impulse — passion — a longing for solitude — a scorn of all things present in an earnest desire for the future." He was proud, vain, erratic, with an exceedingly sensitive and morose temperament; and he drank, and in his last years took opium. Intemperance was inherited, instilled by education, and invited by suffering — a fatal frailty which he shared with Coleridge, De Quincey, and Lamb. In personal manners he was refined and gentlemanly, in conversation elegant and fascinating, in his domestic life pure, loving, and beloved.

Personal Misfortunes

Poe must be studied as critic, poet, and romancer; in each department his work was original and foundational. He gave models to American authors at a time when new models and new methods were much needed. In his reviews of new books, which he always made a prominent feature of his editorial work, he taught American authors their first lesson in independent criticism, demonstrating the function of taste and literary principles. His criticism was acute, fearless, often severe, and sometimes unjust, owing to personal animosities. "He seems at times," said Lowell, "to mistake his vial of prussic acid for his inkstand." But acid was needed

Poe's Work as a Critic

to counteract the saccharine quality of the criticism of the period, which served mainly as a means of mutual compliment among authors. His most important judgments have all been confirmed by subsequent fame. He was one of the first to proclaim the true genius of Lowell, Hawthorne, Mrs. Browning, Dickens, and Tennyson. Longfellow he foolishly accused of plagiarism, yet rated him as the greatest American poet. He was a free lance, and punctured relentlessly the pufferies of mediocrity, thereby raising a storm of slanderous and revengeful abuse. The "Literati" and "Marginalia" are still piquant reading and suggestive criticism.

As a poet Poe worked in a very limited field, but within his limits he made himself supreme. He is the poet of one mood; melancholy possesses his soul; he walks in the shadow of death, and despairing grief is his theme. The season of his inspiration is "lonesome October," the place, the "dank tarn of Auber," the hour, "midnight dreary." There is little objective reality in his verse or prose; he works in the pure ether of the imagination. The characters are bloodless, ghostly, or angelic. Landscape, incident, persons, and places have no existence outside his fancy. He is a lesser Coleridge. The chief pleasure of his poetry arises from its exquisite melody. There is a potent magic in his expression, quite independent of the symbolic meaning his words are intended to convey. In the "Haunted Palace," for example, one loses the allegory while listening to

Characteristics of his Poetry

the music. Upon the simplest verse forms, usually the ballad measure, he imposes a rhythmic beauty, prolonged by the refrain in a strange haunting appeal, that is marvelous. Stedman calls him the "forerunner of our chief experts in form and sound." And similarly the English poet-critic Gosse declares: "Poe has proved himself to be the Piper of Hamelin to all later English poets. From Tennyson to Austin Dobson there is hardly one whose verse music does not show traces of Poe's influence."

Poe worked out a theory of poetic art, expounded in "The Poetic Principle," to which he adhered consistently. Poetry he defines as "the rhythmical creation of beauty"; its object is pleasure, not truth; music is its essential element, hence sound may be superior to sense, and didacticism is a "heresy." Since intense emotion cannot be long sustained, a long poem is a "contradiction in terms." An epic is not a true poem, at best only a "series of lyrics" woven together with uninteresting material. By the same reasoning, he maintained that prose romances should be short. These critical principles are valuable, but not fundamental, and indicate Poe's own unrecognized limitations.

"The Poetic Principle"

The reputation of Poe's poetry, based upon hardly more than a dozen lyrics, has advanced steadily since his death, in spite of hostile and contemptuous criticism. "The Raven" has been called "the most popular lyrical poem in the world." Certainly no other

modern lyric has been so widely discussed and so frequently translated into other languages. Says Stedman: "The melody of this strange poem is that of a vocal dead march and so compulsive with its peculiar measure, its refrain and repetends, that in the end even the more critical yielded to its quaintness and fantasy, and accorded it a lasting place in literature." The marvelous vocal manipulation of words in the "Bells" is without a rival. This poem, as first published, was but eighteen lines long. With an insatiate desire for perfection, Poe repeatedly recast and refined his poetry, laboring upon a precious bit of art like a devoted lapidary. Probably the most spontaneous lyrics are "Ulalume," and "Annabel Lee," in which is undoubtedly enshrined the memory of his beautiful wife.

His Lyrical Power

> But our love it was stronger by far than the love
> Of those who were older than we,
> Of many far wiser than we;
> And neither the angels in heaven above,
> Nor the demons down under the sea,
> Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
> Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

Many, with Emerson, may regard such verse as merely the work of a "jingle man," but no one with the true poetic sense can escape the fascination of such melody. Poe's power was lyrical only. Poetry was with him, he said, "not a purpose but a passion," and into these few scrupulously wrought lyrics he poured the very

finest of his mystical aspirations. His highest endowment was like that of his own "Israfel" —

> Whose heartstrings are a lute.

The prose romances stand unique and original in fiction, as do his lyrics in poetry. Their motives are beauty, mystery, and terror. In style they are as scrupulously artistic as the poems, remarkable especially for the purity and refinement of language. Some, like "Ligeia," "Shadow," and "The Domain of Arnheim," are veritable prose poems. But the same masterly art is often employed upon themes that are repulsive, horrible, and blood-freezing. Poe at times equals Hawthorne in the art of the short story, but he lacks the moral and spiritual qualities that enrich Hawthorne's tales. The human element is wanting, the broad and subtle sympathy with external life. "The New Englander had the profounder insight; the Southerner's magic was that of the necromancer who resorts to spells and devices." There is also no humor, the nearest approach being the fantastic and grotesque. The finest stories, nevertheless, the "Fall of the House of Usher," "Shadow," "The Gold Bug," and others, are accepted masterpieces that have served as models for all subsequent workers in fiction. "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and others of the ingenious analytical tales are prototypes of the modern detective story. Poe was also a pioneer in the fiction of morbid psychology and

The Prose Tales

pseudo-science. The man pursued by his double, in "William Wilson," suggests Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and a multitude of Vernesque stories have their common paternity in such tales as "Hans Pfaall" and "A Descent into the Maelstrom."

His best tales, says Myers, "show an intensity which perhaps no successor has reached; not only in his conception of the play of weird passions in weird environments, but in a still darker mood of mind which must keep its grim attractiveness as long as the mystery of the universe shall press upon the lives of men." Woodberry says: "On the roll of our literature Poe's name is inscribed with the few foremost, and in the world at large his genius is established as valid among all men;" and qualifyingly adds: "Being gifted with the dreaming instinct, the myth-making faculty, the allegorizing power, and with no other poetic element of high genius, he exercised his art in a region of vague feeling, symbolic ideas, and fantastic imagery, and wrought his spell largely through sensuous effects of color, sound, and gloom, heightened by lurking but unshaped suggestions of mysterious meanings. Now and then gleams of light and stretches of lovely landscape shine out, but for the most part his mastery was over dismal, superstitious, and waste places."

Critical Estimates

Class Study. — *Poems:* The Raven; The Bells; Ulalume; Israfel; To Helen; The Haunted Palace; Annabel Lee; The City in the Sea; To One in Paradise; The Sleeper.

Tales: The Gold Bug; Fall of the House of Usher; Shadow — A Parable.

Reading and Discussion. — The Purloined Letter; A Descent into the Maelstrom; The Masque of the Red Death.

Biography and Criticism. — Woodberry's "Edgar Allan Poe" (American Men of Letters). Stoddard's "Memoir of Poe" (Collected Works, 1884). Stedman and Woodberry's "Works of Edgar Allan Poe," 1894. Ingram's "Edgar Allan Poe, his Life, Letters, and Opinions." Wilson's "Bryant and his Friends." Gill's "Life of Edgar Allan Poe." Griswold's "Biographical Sketch of Poe," 1850. Stedman's "Poets of America." Richardson's "American Literature." Andrew Lang's "Letters to Dead Authors." Higginson's "Short Studies of American Authors." Robertson's "New Essays toward a Critical Method." Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Gosse's "Questions at Issue." Wendell's "Literary History of America." Library of the World's Best Literature (F. W. H. Myers). Gates's "Studies and Appreciations." Matthews's "Pen and Ink." Willis's "Hurry-graphs." Fruit's "Mind and Art of Poe's Poetry." *Forum*, June, 1901. *Atlantic*, Dec., 1899 (H. W. Mabie). William Winter's "Edgar Poe."

Out of the despair and desolation of the Civil War there arose three Southern poets whose lives constitute the most pathetic story in our literature. They were alike endowed with distinct poetic gifts, filled with pure and lofty enthusiasm, and cruelly baffled in their fervid pursuit of poetry by calamitous misfortune. They served in the Confederate army, and at the end of the war entered upon a severer struggle with poverty and mortal disease. The war had swept away their ancestral property, the exposures of army life, followed by extreme labor and penury had shattered

Three Poets of Misfortune

their health, and the chances for a literary career were almost utterly hopeless. Yet with a soldier's heart and a poet's roseate hope each devoted the remnant of his broken life to art, and sang his songs cheerfully and sweetly, even while the angel of death was knocking at the door. The purity of their personal characters and the nobility of their struggles endeared them to loving friends and hallowed forever their memories; and their work, which is perhaps the promise more than the proof of genius, has steadily advanced in the esteem of the critics until the names of Timrod, Hayne, and Lanier are accorded a permanent place in the roll of standard American poets.

HENRY TIMROD

1830–1867

Henry Timrod, "one of the very sweetest names connected with Charleston," said Lanier, was born in Charleston in 1830 and died in 1867. He was educated at the University of Georgia, where a large part of his leisure, he said, "was occupied with the composition of love verses, frantic or tender." He began the study of law, but soon exchanged his Blackstone for more poetic authors, and for about ten years was engaged in private tutoring. Meanwhile he was a member of the literary coterie of which Simms was the presiding genius, and with his friend Hayne aided in the ambitious project of *Russell's Magazine*,

which like every early Southern magazine perished in tender youth for want of appreciation. In 1860 a small volume of poems was published in Boston, which contained the promise of wide fame. But the war came and with heart aflame with loyalty to his state he sang the Tyrtæan strains of "Carolina" and "A Call to Arms," two of the best war lyrics of the South.

Timrod went to the front as a war correspondent. In 1864 he became associate editor of the *South Carolinian*, at Columbia, and, believing his future to be secure, married the "Katie" memorialized in his poems. In less than a year came Sherman's army, cutting its terrible swath to the sea, and Timrod was left destitute. A few months later his idolized child died, and in the little grave "a large portion of the father's heart was buried," says Hayne. The two years more of life were a prolonged fight with disease and poverty. Gradually the remnants of furniture and the family plate went for food and rent. With a grim playfulness he wrote: "Let me see — yes, we have eaten two silver pitchers, one or two dozen silver forks, several sofas, innumerable chairs, and a huge — bedstead!" And yet manfully he worked and wrote, with uncomplaining and generous spirit, to the sorrowful end.

War and Poverty

"Timrod's was probably the most finely endowed mind to be found in Carolina, or indeed in the whole South, at this period," says Professor Trent. "He has not left much work behind him, and that work is

marred by the effects which constant sickness and poverty and the stress of war had upon his genius; but he has left a few singularly beautiful poems, and one at least, the ode written for the occasion of the decoration of the Confederate graves in Magnolia Cemetery, that approximates perfection, — the perfection of Collins."

Class Study. — Spring; The Cotton Boll; The Unknown Dead; Flower Life; Too Long, O Spirit of Storm; The Lily Confidante; Ode, sung at the Decoration of Graves of Confederate Dead.

Biography and Criticism. — Hayne's Edition of Timrod's Poems, 1873. Link's "Pioneers of Southern Literature." Introduction to Memorial Edition, 1899. *Outlook*, May 11, 1901. Hayne's "Under the Pine," and "By the Grave of Henry Timrod." Austin's "Henry Timrod" (*Independent*, May 2, 1901).

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

1830–1886

Paul Hamilton Hayne, the "poet laureate of the South," was born in Charleston, in 1830. He was educated under the fostering care of his uncle, Robert Y. Hayne, the illustrious opponent of Webster. Possessing an ample fortune, he was free to choose his career, and finding the law unsuited to his tastes, early gave himself to letters. From the little group that gathered at the literary dinners of Simms, he was selected for the editorship of *Russell's Magazine*, which in the rose-colored hopes

A Youth of Promise

of these literary aspirants was to be the *Blackwood's* of America. He was also busily writing for the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and other periodicals. Poetry was his destiny, and the resolution to follow in its course could not be shaken by dire calamity.

> Yet would I rather in the outward state
> Of song's immortal temple lay me down,
> A beggar basking by that radiant gate,
> Than bend beneath the haughtiest empire's crown.

Before 1861 Hayne published three volumes of poems, which were well received by the critics and poets of the North. He lived in a beautiful home, with a large library, and with the social advantages of family prestige. The future was bright with the promise of a successful literary career. Moreover, he was married to the woman who, as Mrs. Preston says, "by her self renunciation, her exquisite sympathy, her positive, material help, her bright hopefulness, made endurable the losses and trials that crowded Hayne's life." At the outbreak of the war, like his fellow poets, filled with the passion of the hour, he poured his heart into impetuous lyrics like "My Mother Land" and "Beyond the Potomac." He also served in the field as long as his frail health permitted. But the bitter end of the war came, and Hayne found himself a ruined man, in a land of ruined homes and shattered hopes.

Calamities of War

No career now open to him could be more utterly hopeless than that of poet. He was without money

and without health, and he could expect little aid or encouragement from the impoverished people to whom his poetry must be addressed. Undaunted, however, by the ills that beset him, and true to his early resolution, Hayne procured a few acres of land in the pine barrens of northern Georgia, built a little cottage of rough, unjointed boards, and there in the seclusion of the murmuring pines, "among the peaches, melons, and strawberries of his own raising, fought the fight of life with uncomplaining bravery and persisted in being happy." Says Maurice Thompson: "No beauty that money buys was there — for very little money ever crossed the threshold — but the invisible, imperishable beauty of sweet souls was there, informing everything. The place became a sort of Southern Mecca, to which loving folk made pilgrimages; and its name, 'Copse Hill,' grew familiar to all the world."

A Poet's Hermitage

Here Hayne worked until the end came, in 1886. In 1872 "Legends and Lyrics" appeared, and the next year his edition of Timrod's poems, with the tender biography of his lamented friend. In 1882 a complete collection of his poems was published in Boston, in which his merits were at last adequately presented. The poems written afterward are unfortunately still scattered in the magazines.

The spirit of Hayne was brave, but gentle. He sang thrilling war songs, but sang more naturally the beauties of peace. His talent was lyrical, and his

finest poems are those in which the lyric emotions are most spontaneous. His narrative verse, however, as in "Daphles," is not without distinctive merit. The sonnet was a favorite form with him, the difficulties of which he managed with ease, and often with marked success. His verse is graceful in finish, smooth, melodious, at times almost sensuous in its music. Deprived of the broad associations of the world, exiled from the accumulated treasures of art, he turned with intense devotion to nature. The pine and the mocking-bird, with their characteristic Southern setting, are his special contributions to American poetry; he is as true to his native soil as Whittier or Lowell. Filled with a fervid love for

Poetic Qualities

> The balm and beauty of the lustrous South,

in happy rhythmic phrasing, he converts the common things of wood and field to the uses of poetry: peach blooms that "blush and burn" as "with love's own tint on Spring's enamored face"; violets "touched by the vapory noontide's fleeting gold"; the azaleas, "blended blooms of fire"; the pine cone's "numberless, dim complexities"; "white robed lilies," soft spirea, "woven of moonshine's misty bars," and the jonquil that "riots like some rude hoiden uncontrolled."

With reverent spirit he leans his ear to nature —

> Attuned to every tiniest trill of sound,
> Whether by brook or bird
> The perfumed air be stirred.
> But most, because the unwearied strains are fraught

With Nature's freedom in her happiest moods,
I love the mock-bird's and brown thrush's lay,
The melted soul of May.

The melody itself of the mocking-bird's song he sometimes catches for his verse: —

We scarce can deem it a marvel,
For the songs *our* nightingale sings
Throb warm and sweet with the rhythmic beat
Of the fervors of countless springs.
All beautiful measures of sky and earth
Outpour in a second and rarer birth
From that mellow throat. When the winds are whist,
And he follows his mate to their sunset tryst,
Where the wedded myrtles and jasmine twine,
Oh! the swell of his music is half divine!

There is an occasional suggestion of Wordsworth in Hayne's poetry — an echo rather than an influence, — and there is a frequent undertone of pathos. Even under the luminous skies that lighted up his pines, the shadows about his life could not be wholly dissipated. His pensive thought is often

Far off, far off, within the shrouded heart
Of immemorial hills.

One is moved almost to tears by the heart-yearning expressed in "England": —

Land of my father's love, my father's race,
How long must I in weary exile sigh
To meet thee, O my Empress, face to face,
To kiss thy radiant robes before I die?

But he is only lured by a "lustrous dream" —

England! I shall not see thee ere I die.

Class Study. — Aspects of the Pines; Lyric of Action; The First Mocking-bird in Spring; Windless Rain; The Voice in the Pines; To a Bee; Love's Autumn; England. *Sonnets:* Earth Odors after Rain; October; The Hyacinth; Japonicas.

Class Reading. — The Mocking-bird at Night; Daphles; The Little White Glove; The Stricken South to the North; The Battle of King's Mountain; Above the Storm; Thunder at Midnight; A Summer Mood; Unveiled; Ode to Sleep.

Biography and Criticism. — Margaret J. Preston's Sketch in edition of 1882. Link's "Pioneers of Southern Literature." Lanier's "Music and Poetry." *Lippincott's Magazine*, September, 1890, and December, 1892.

Philip Bourke Marston's "To Paul Hamilton Hayne." William Hamilton Hayne's "At My Father's Grave."

SIDNEY LANIER

1842–1881

Of the little band of Southern poets, after Poe, the one whose work has most strongly impressed itself upon the critical consciousness of the period is Sidney Lanier, whose poems are rated by a good critic as "the rarest product of English or American literature during the last quarter of a century," and who in personal character was so pure, refined, and chivalrous, and in the pursuit of his ideals was so noble and devoted, as to be called "the Sir Galahad among American poets."

Lanier was born in Georgia in 1842. His earliest passion was for music, an inheritance from a long line of musical ancestors extending back to the court of Elizabeth. Even before he could write legibly he

learned to play the flute, organ, piano, guitar, and banjo, devoting himself especially to the flute, in deference to his father's wishes, who "feared for him the powerful fascination of the violin." So strong was the appeal of violin tones to his sensitive nature that from a state of exalted rapture he would sometimes sink into a deep trance, from which he would awake "sorely shaken in mind." He graduated from Oglethorpe College at eighteen with the highest honors, and held a tutorship in the college until the outbreak of the war. Answering the first call to arms, he entered the Confederate army and served until 1864, three times refusing promotion because he would not be separated from his younger brother. While in command of a blockade runner, he was captured by the Federal forces and imprisoned at Point Lookout, carrying to prison his beloved flute concealed in his sleeve. In camp he studied French and German with as much diligence as military duty would permit; Heine's poems, Hugo's "Les Miserables," and his flute were his consolation. Though loyal to the cause for which he fought, the unhallowed and hideous character of war, as a means of righting wrongs, became more and more impressed upon his refined spirit. His experiences and impressions during the war were embodied in the novel "Tiger Lilies," published in 1867, a book full of exuberant thought and luxuriant description, in unshaded coloring appropriately symbolized by the title flower, yet revealing plainly the poet soul.

Passion for Music; Study and War

After an imprisonment of five months he was released, in February, 1865, and with much suffering made his way on foot to the distant home in Georgia. A severe illness followed, and the seeds of pulmonary disease were developed, with which he battled thenceforth to the end. He must needs earn money, and so worked as clerk in a hotel, taught in a country academy, then studied and practiced law with his father.

From War to Art

But all this was against the bent of his desires. Two passions ruled his life, music and poetry. In 1873, "taking his flute and pen for sword and staff," he went North, and at Baltimore obtained an engagement as first flute in the Peabody Orchestra. Here he now settled with his family and began the pathetic twofold struggle for literature and for life in which his remaining years were spent. His father deprecated this hazardous attempt to live by art, but to his protest he answered, reminding him how through long years of poverty, war, sickness, and other discouragements the two figures of music and poetry had steadily remained in his heart: "Does it not seem to you, as to me, that I begin to have the right to enroll myself among the devotees of these two sublime arts, after having followed them so long and so humbly, and through so much bitterness?"

Lanier was now in a congenial atmosphere of books, culture, and scholarship, a paradise of delights and opportunities for which his soul had hungered and thirsted. He plunged ardently into thorough courses

of study, mastering Anglo-Saxon and Early English, and reading extensively in modern literature, all to perfect himself in the knowledge and art of poetry. He labored for an enrichment of mind adequate to sustain the imagination in its loftiest flights. Of Poe he once remarked with some truth, "He did not know enough." The music of his flute was a marvelous natural gift; poetry he studied with the laborious enthusiasm of a scientist. But meanwhile his family must have bread, so he wrote lectures and boys' books and magazine articles, "when," as he said, "a thousand songs are singing in my heart, that will certainly kill me if I do not utter them soon." Moreover, work was frequently stopped for months at a time by harrowing illness. "He was driven to Texas, to Florida, to Pennsylvania, to North Carolina, to try to recover health from pine breaths and clover blossoms." In 1879 he was appointed to a lectureship on English Literature in Johns Hopkins University, which he held until his death in 1881, presenting his final lectures when he could hardly command breath enough to make his words audible. Baffled at every step toward the goal of his great desires, and beaten back into the pathway of suffering and death, he yet maintained to the last a sweet, uncomplaining Christian spirit. Between the lines of his cheerful communications, however, Hayne thought he could "detect the slow, half-muffled throb of heartbreak there." The circumstances of his life form indeed "a pa

The Struggle for Art and Life

thetically tragic setting to his pure-souled, beautiful work."

In 1875 the poem "Corn" appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine*, announcing widely the fact that a star of the first magnitude had arisen in poetry. Bayard Taylor hailed it as "the first new voice of song which the South has blown to us over the ashes of battle," and added, "The whole poem throbs with sunshine, and is musical with the murmurs of growing things." Through Taylor's kind offices Lanier was invited to write the "Cantata" for the opening of the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia. For a railroad company he wrote "Florida," a "kind of spiritualized guide-book," he called it. In 1877 he published a small volume of poems, the only collection made during his lifetime. The "Boy's Froissart," "Boy's King Arthur," "Boy's Mabinogion," and "Boy's Percy" were editions of the old English classics prepared for young people. His chief work in prose is "The English Novel and the Principles of its Development," containing much wise and luminous criticism of modern literature, and "The Science of English Verse," in which the poet expounds his original and peculiar theory of versification.

Work in Verse and Prose

Lanier sought to establish the complete correlation of music and poetry. He wished to give greater freedom to poetic expression by substituting for the usual metrical rules the rhythmical notation of music. The appeal is to the ear

The Science of Poetry

through harmony and melody. Rhythm is determined, not by accents or number of syllables, but by the time element alone. Richness and variety of "tone-color" are to be secured by rhyme, alliteration, and the distribution and repetition of euphonious vowels and consonants. In short, symphonic effects are to be obtained in verse as in orchestration. The obvious criticism upon this theory is that the element of rhythm in poetry is magnified to undue importance, too studious attention to sound resulting often in a sacrifice of sense and clearness. The two masterpieces, "Sunrise" and "Marshes of Glynn," go far toward vindicating his theory. But Lanier was too genuine a poet to rest in theory or rules, and he concludes his unique analytical treatise with the broad principle, "For the artist in verse there is no law; the perception and love of beauty constitute the whole outfit." Although to be regarded as suggestive rather than authoritative and final, the "Science of English Verse" is the most valuable contribution to the subject of verse structure yet produced.

Only the latest of Lanier's poems were written under the influence of his perfected principles, and these contain golden promises of what he would have achieved had he lived to give wider expression to his teeming imagination. For onomatopoetic rhythm his "Song of the Chattahoochee" deserves to be read with Tennyson's "Brook":—

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side,
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

He was a passionate lover of nature, "a pantheist who felt God in everything." The outward world responded to his fancy with a consecrated, as well as a melodious voice. Like Keats's "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," he coined for himself a favorite phrase, "The beauty of holiness, and the holiness of beauty." His far-reaching rhythms are reverberant with sacred melody: —

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the Catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain,
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.
As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

The poem "Sunrise" was the poet's swan song, poured forth with his last breath. Its wealth of outdoor observation not only makes "Thoreau seem thin and arid," says Higginson, but combined with this is "a roll and range of rhythm such as Lowell's 'Commemoration Ode' cannot equal, and only some of Browning's early ocean cadences surpass." This and the "Marshes of Glynn" are, says Richard Burton, "magnificent organ chants of a dying man, never so strong of soul as when his body hung by a tenuous thread to life."

The work of Lanier, says Burton, "has the glow and color of the South — an exuberance of imagination and a rhythmic sweep which awaken a kind of exultant delight in the sensitive reader. A consummate artist, Lanier showed himself a pioneer in the handling of words and meters; his richness of rhythms and alliterations, his marvelous feeling for tone color, fellow him with an English poet like Swinburne. He opened new possibilities of metrical and stanzaic arrangements, and therewith revealed new powers of word-use and combination in English poetry, drawing on the treasures of the older word-hoard which his study, taste, and instinct suggested. He certainly broadened in this way the technic of verse, and on this side of his art was truly remarkable."

The Value of his Work

Class Study. — **Sunrise; Marshes of Glynn; Song of the Chattahoochee; Tampa Robins; Corn; My Springs; The Bee; The Stirrup Cup.**

Class Reading. — The Mocking-Bird; The Revenge of Hamish; A Song of Love; A Song of the Future; The Symphony.

Biography and Criticism. — William Hayes Ward's "Memorial" ("Poems of Sidney Lanier"). Baskervill's "Sidney Lanier" ("Southern Writers"). Bayard Taylor's "Essays and Notes." Higginson's "Contemporaries." Library of the World's Best Literature (Richard Burton). Callaway's "Select Poems of Sidney Lanier." *Presbyterian Review*, October, 1887 (Merrill E. Gates). *Living Age*, May 14 and 21, 1898 (Mme. Blanc). Wendell's "Literary History of America."

Paul Hamilton Hayne's "The Pole of Death." Barbe's "Sidney Lanier" ("Ashes and Incense"). William Hamilton Hayne's "Sidney Lanier."

THE STORY-TELLERS

In 1885, in a statement of what he thought to be "the promise of the South," Stedman wrote: "The strongly dramatic fiction of Cable, Miss Murfree, Page, Johnston, and others, clearly betokens the revived imagination of a glowing clime. The great heart of the generous and lonely South, too long restrained, — of the South once so prodigal of romance, eloquence, gallant aspiration, — once more has found expression." The promise of this literary movement, which began about 1870, and has now spread throughout the South, has been richly fulfilled. Add to the list given by Stedman the names of Harris and Allen and we have a group of writers representing the finest story-telling of our times. In freshness, originality, truth, dramatic force, and artistic finish

Southern Novelists

their work stands with the best products of contemporary novelists. They are especially masters of the short story, a field in which American authors have achieved an artistic success that is rivaled only by that of the French. Each member of this group, while strictly and broadly representative of his section, has selected a limited field or particular phase of Southern life and described it with loving fidelity. Cable opened to the view of the world the quaint old Creole quarter of New Orleans, Harris discovered the fascinating folklore of the negro, Page pictured the oldtime relations of slave and master in Virginia, Johnston described with a delightfully humorous pen the "cracker" life of middle Georgia, Miss Murfree led her readers into the remote wilds of the Tennessee mountains, and Allen found romance and poetry in the "blue-grass region" of Kentucky.

George Washington Cable was born in New Orleans in 1844. Owing to financial misfortunes of the family he was early forced into a practical money-getting life, and thus prevented from obtaining a systematic education. He served in the Confederate army, and still bears the evidences of heroic soldiership. After the war he passed through a varied experience as clerk, surveyor, and newspaper reporter. In the brief intervals of leisure snatched from the duties of a cotton broker's office he began writing and sending to *Scribner's Monthly* the short stories of Creole life that established his fame.

George Washington Cable, 1844–

They appeared in book form in 1879. This volume was followed by "The Grandissimes," his most elaborate and powerful novel, "Madame Delphine," "Dr. Sevier," and the idyllic "Bonaventure." He has written other books, but none that can be compared with these in literary value.

Without the usual advantages of early education, without literary associations, almost without books, by the mere push of inherent literary power, Cable fashioned for himself a method and a style unsurpassed for grace and delicacy of finish in the prose of modern fiction. His English is pure, simple, smooth, almost poetical in its refinement, alive and throbbing with passion, and pleasingly interwoven with the melodious dialect of the Creole. With the conscience of a historian and the eye of a poet, he presents the scenes and characters with which his own life was intimately associated; he paints the reality of a quaint and picturesque life with the fascinating tints of ideal coloring.

Style

Vital and strong as are "The Grandissimes" and "Dr. Sevier," Cable's masterpieces are the delicately artistic short tales of the type with which he began in "Old Creole Days." To this book still clings somewhat of that sense of delighted surprise with which the tales were first read. "They were fresh, full of color and poetic feeling, romantic with the romance of the life they portrayed, redolent of indigenous perfumes — magnolia, lemon, orange,

Classic Short Stories

and myrtle, mingled with French exotics from the boudoir — interpretative in these qualities, through a fine perception, of a social condition resulting from the transplanting to semi-tropical soil of a conservative, wealthy, and aristocratic French community. Herein lay much of their most inviting charm; but more than this, they were racy with twinkling humor, tender with a melting pathos, and intensely dramatic."

"'Uncle Remus' is one of the few creations of American writers," says Professor Baskervill, "worthy of a place in the gallery of the immortals." The creator of "Uncle Remus," Joel Chandler Harris, was born in Georgia in 1848. An account of his early life is given in his book "On the Plantation." He spent several years in the family of a wealthy planter, who possessed a large library and a private printing-press. Here young Harris learned printing, read extensively, and hunted possums and rabbits with the negroes. Sympathy is his finest gift; from his earliest years he has had a strange sympathy with animals of all kinds; moreover, above all things, he tells us, he loves a story and "human nature, humble, fascinating, plain, common human nature." It was through this extraordinary gift of sympathy that he was enabled, while on the plantation, to penetrate to the most intimate secrets of negro life and character, and gather the rich store of myth, story, humor, and wisdom with which he has surprised, entertained, and instructed the world.

Joel Chandler Harris, 1848-1908

Sherman's army swept over the Turner plantation and Harris's bucolic days were ended. The strenuous work of reconstruction called him, and he entered actively into the reviving journalism of the South, finally becoming associated with the *Atlanta Constitution*, through which his fame as a writer of negro dialect was first made. "Uncle Remus" began his career of popular favor in 1880, and since then his "sayings" have been household words, and "Brer Rabbit" and "Brer Fox" have been included among the best-known characters of fiction. Other volumes followed, wrought from the same delightful material, some of them extending, however, into the broader field of representative Southern life, as "Nights with Uncle Remus," "Mingo," "Free Joe," "Daddy Jake," and "Balaam and his Master."

"Uncle Remus"

The "Uncle Remus" stories were an original revelation and a contribution of the highest value to folklore as well as to literature. Harris found the negro living in an unsuspected world of poetry, and this world he has presented to us with its wealth of quaint story-telling, darky dialect, wit, humor, philosophy and "unadulterated human nature." Thomas Nelson Page generously declares that "no one who has ever written has known one tenth part about the negro that Mr. Harris knows." He pictures with perfect accuracy the life of the old plantation days, giving the light and dark

The Interpreter of Negro Life

side of slavery, — its comedy and its tragedy, its happiness and its misery, — and proves himself to be the negro's perfect interpreter to the world. "Like all genuine humorists," says Professor Baskervill, "Mr. Harris has his wit always seasoned with love, and a moral purpose underlies all his writings. In the twelve volumes or more which he has published, he has preserved traditions and legends, photographed a civilization, perpetuated types, created one character. Humor and sympathy are his chief qualities, and in everything he is simple and natural."

Mary Noailles Murfree ("Charles Egbert Craddock"), who was born in 1850, near Murfreesboro, Tenn., has reclaimed in a remarkable manner an uncouth section of American civilization for the refined uses of literature. During her early life she spent fifteen successive summers in the mountains of eastern Tennessee, and through a keen eye and a sympathetic heart obtained a masterly familiarity with the unique life of the rude mountaineers. The wild features of mountain peak and rocky ravine, the rough qualities of a lawless, whisky-distilling, strangely religious population, she reproduces with masculine strength and boldness. She possesses also a dramatic power adequate for the presentation of a society in which life and death are often determined by the swift law of private revenge and bar-room justice. Natural scenery she paints with a skillful touch that shows the teaching of Ruskin,

Mary Noailles Murfree, 1850–

describing with a richness of coloring that becomes at times excessive, and in the primitive mountain homes she discovers charming springs of humor, pathos, and romance.

"I 'member when I war a gal," says old Mis' Cayce, "whisky war so cheap that up to the store at the settlemint they'd hev a bucket set full o' whisky an' a gourd, free fur all comers, an' another bucket alongside with water ter season it. An' the way that thar water lasted war surprisin'; that it war!" Such is the region Miss Murfree has made her own. The sensation in America produced by discovering the author of "A-Playin' of Old Sledge at the Settlemint" to be a woman was much like that which attended the disclosure of the identity of George Eliot. Her first successful books were "In the Tennessee Mountains," 1884, a collection of short stories; "Down the Ravine"; "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains," and "In the Clouds." These have been followed by many others in rapid succession, so rapid as to reveal the common frailty of popular novelists, over-production with consequent deterioration in quality. In "Where the Battle was Fought," she departs from her familiar scenes to describe the desolation left by the Civil War around her early home.

Characteristic Work

Thomas Nelson Page, born in 1853, educated at the University of Virginia, and engaged for a time with the law, committed himself irrevocably to literature in

1883 with a little volume of dialect poems, "Befo' de War." His success as a story writer was made the next year with "Marse Chan," the most graceful and touching story of the war yet written. This story, "Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin," "Meh Lady," and others collected in the volume, "In Ole Virginia," are masterpieces of humor and pathos, and in some respects quite as original in their portrayal of negro character as "Uncle Remus." He is not less happy in describing the "poor white" class, and "Elsket," "Red Rock," and other recent books give promise of excellence in a wider field.

Thomas Nelson Page, 1853-

The love of nature and a free, open-air life, tempered with sunshine and the repose of broad landscapes, came to James Lane Allen as an inheritance from three generations of paternal ancestors, who were easy-going, gentleman farmers in the blue-grass region of Kentucky. In this land of stately homes, fine flocks and herds, fragrant clover meadows, and golden wheat fields, Allen was born in 1850, and out of his minute knowledge of its pastoral beauty and social characteristics he has produced the charmingly delicate and artistic sketches and stories, "The Blue Grass Region of Kentucky," "A Kentucky Cardinal," "Aftermath," "The Choir Invisible," and "The Reign of Law." Two stories, "The White Cowl" and "Sister Dolorosa," present with studied truthfulness the mediæval spirit of the Trappist Monastery and the Convent of Loretto. His special literary features are a devoted

James Lane Allen, 1850-

attention to local history and color, realism permeated with poetry, a quiet, reflective temperament that prefers a mood or spiritual problem to plot and action. By grace, purity, and refinement he charms the reader and entices his thought out of the commonplace to things higher and more beautiful.

Class Reading. — Cable's "Old Creole Days" and "Bonaventure." Harris's "Uncle Remus" and "Free Joe." Miss Murfree's "In the Tennessee Mountains" and "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains." Page's "In Ole Virginia." Allen's "A Kentucky Cardinal."

Biography and Criticism. — Baskervill's "Southern Writers." Vedder's "American Writers of To-day." Richardson's "American Literature," Vol II, ch. 12. *Lippincott's Magazine*, December, 1891.

Richard Malcolm Johnston (1822–1898) contributed much to our knowledge of Southern types as well as to our literary delight in his "Dukesborough Tales," "Old Mark Langston," "Ogeechee Cross-Firings," and other volumes of humorous tales descriptive of Georgia life. Among the first to appreciate the literary possibilities of the negro character was Irwin Russell (1853–1879), whose little volume of "Poems" is the only memorial of a life of brilliant promise and unhappy end. Many minor poets of the South will be remembered for single famous lyrics, such as James R. Randall's "Maryland, My Maryland"; Theodore O'Hara's "Bivouac of the Dead"; Father Ryan's "The Conquered Banner"; Albert Pike's "Dixie"; and Frank O. Ticknor's "Virginians of the Valley." This last writer, almost unknown, was pronounced by Hayne to be "one of the truest and sweetest lyric poets this country has yet produced." Maurice Thompson (1844–1901), poet, essayist, naturalist, and novelist, was true to his Southern heritage, as shown by the atmosphere and local color of his

Minor Writers of the South

"Songs of Fair Weather," "By-ways and Bird Notes," "Sylvan Secrets," and other inspiring books. His last and most popular book, "Alice of Old Vincennes," is a stirring tale of the Revolutionary period. It is a significant fact that women were the first to recognize the literary opportunity of the South. The success of "Christian Reid" (Frances C. Tiernan), author of "The Land of the Sky," was an encouragement to many others. "The first work to utilize the romantic materials of the war without gross partisanry," says Page, was "Sunnybank," by "Marion Harland" (Mrs. M. V. Terhune), (1835–) who has since produced a long list of popular books. Margaret J. Preston's (1825–1897) "Beechenbrook" and other poems contain many strains that are cherished for their elegiac beauty and tenderness. Grace King (1859–), author of "Monsieur Motte" and "Balcony Stories," follows modestly and successfully in the footsteps of Cable with her strong pictures of Creole life in New Orleans. Amélie Rives (Princess Troubetskoy) (1863–) has shown remarkable literary possibilities in "A Brother to Dragons," "Herod and Mariamne," and other fiction and verse. The perfervid passion, dramatic directness, and staccato audacity of expression in her stories won for a time a wide and sensational popularity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Wilson's "Division and Reunion" (Epochs of American History). Burgess's "Civil War and Reconstruction." Thomas Nelson Page's "The Old South." Link's "Pioneers of Southern Literature." Lanier's "Retrospects and Prospects" ("The New South"). Wendell's "Literary History of America." Manly's "Southern Literature." Warner's "Studies in the South and West." White's "Robert E. Lee and the Southern Confederacy." Trent's "Robert E. Lee" (Beacon Biographies). Miss Woolson's "Rodman the Keeper." Wise's "End of an Era."

CHAPTER VIII

THE HISTORIANS

It is a common mistake to assume that historical writing is devoid of literary interest, and that therefore in a record of the literary expression of a nation it is to be subordinated, or altogether ignored. History is a part of literature when it possesses the distinction of style. Macaulay wrote with rhetorical brilliancy and Carlyle with dramatic intensity, and the work of each lives by virtue of an individual saliency of style; others have possessed themselves of the same facts, but have failed to make living history because they lacked the illuminating power of the imagination and the artistic sense of literary form. To scientific accuracy in the collection and collocation of facts must be added the graces and amenities of art, in order to secure for a historical work the permanency of a classic. The great mass of historical writing is merely history in the rough, material that needs the final touch of genius to convert it into real history.

Literary Quality of History

America is fortunate in the possession of historians of the first rank, and it is significant that each one of

the leaders of our historical school began his career under the influence of distinctly literary predilections. Bancroft first appeared before the public with a volume of poems; the first books of Motley and Hildreth were novels; among Parkman's first publications was a novel, and his early ambition was to write poetry; and Prescott's original inclination was toward pure literature. While thoroughly imbued with the spirit of scientific research, these men had the superior sense, so often wanting in the scientific consciousness, to recognize the necessity of the imaginative and artistic elements in any written product that is to secure a broad and permanent interest; hence three, at least, of these historians produced narratives that combine a painstaking devotion to fact with the vivid coloring of fiction. Such histories as Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico" and Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic" are emphatically literary classics.

Classic American History

The historical product of the colonial period was naturally crude in form and largely local, personal, or ecclesiastical in origin. Strong-souled leaders of the early colonists, like Bradford and Winthrop, with a prophetic confidence in the high destiny of their doings, wrote out as best they could, in the midst of their conquest of the wilderness, the records of their struggles in the form of "diaries" or "journals." But these quaint and homely narratives, possessing a peculiar interest and

History in the Colonial Period

value in the fact of their personal character, have furnished rich materials for the systematic historian. No nation is so fortunate as America in the fullness of the records of its beginnings. As colonial isolation disappeared and the dawn of a new nation began to rise from the chaos of the Revolution, writers attempted to present a more comprehensive view of American achievements, or, impelled by local pride, chronicled the part played by particular colonies in the foundation-building of the nation.

Thomas Hutchinson, the last colonial governor of Massachusetts, a loyal New Englander by birth and lifelong interest, though a Royalist in political convictions, wrote with laborious zeal his "History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay," which Richardson regards as a "praiseworthy production, even from a literary point of view." Hannah Adams, the first professional literary woman in America, wrote a "History of New England," and a broader and more interesting work was produced by Abiel Holmes, father of Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his "American Annals, or Chronological History of America from its Discovery in MCCCCXCII to MDCCCVI." Jeremy Belknap's accurate and entertaining "History of New Hampshire" (1784) led Bryant to say that its author was "the first to make American history attractive"; and with similar patriotic pride David Ramsay was writing in the remote South his "History of the American Revolution"

Early Historians

(1789), the "History of South Carolina," and a "Life of Washington," works that embodied the results of a wide personal acquaintance with the leading men and events of the period.

The new sense of union and nationality that followed the final settlement of war and the establishing of the constitution, and the rapid expansion of the nation in territory and population, were influences strongly affecting the nascent genius of the time. All literature felt the impulse of the new national life. Scholars were now attracted into the field of national history, as its scope became enlarged with the increasing significance of the past and the alluring promises of the future of the young republic. Early in the century Bancroft chose his life work, and entered with patriotic enthusiasm upon his extensive researches for the "History of the United States"; and soon also his distinguished competitors were selecting great American themes, or themes closely related to America. An American school of historians arose, the founder of which was Jared Sparks.

The Beginning of National History

The appointment of Sparks in 1839 to a professorship of "Ancient and Modern History" in Harvard College "marks the dawn of a new era in American scholarship. It was not only the first recognition of historical science by an American college as worthy of a distinct professional chair, but, in view of the well-known pursuits of the appointee, it was also the

first academic encouragement of American history and of original historical research in the American field."[1]

Jared Sparks, 1789-1866

Sparks was graduated from Harvard in 1815, became a Unitarian minister, and preached for a time in Baltimore, edited the *North American Review* for seven years from 1824, was professor of history at Harvard from 1839 to 1849, and then was made president of the college. In 1832 he published the "Life of Gouverneur Morris," and soon after began to appear the first of his great undertakings, the "Life and Writings of George Washington," in which he illustrated historical methods hitherto quite unknown in America. He made extensive searches for materials, secured the use of private family papers, examined public records, visited Europe, and copied valuable documents in the archives of England and France. The result was, for the time, a worthy tribute to the greatest American. With the same painstaking zeal he edited the "Works of Benjamin Franklin, with a Life of the Author," and the extensive "Library of American Biography," the precursor of modern collections like the "American Statesmen" and "American Men of Letters."

The true literary gift and a well-ordered critical judgment were denied to Sparks, and his own composition, therefore, is the least valuable part of his

[1] Herbert Adams's "Life and Writings of Jared Sparks," Vol. II, p. 269.

works; but as an enthusiastic collector and editor he rendered an inestimable service. After his example of industry the materials for American history were secure and a proper method of dealing with them was insured. His work, says his biographer, was that of "a pathfinder in the vast wilderness of American history. He first opened roads along which modern students are now easily and swiftly passing, too often without a grateful thought for the original explorer."

Value of his Work

With a few notable exceptions, especially the monumental work of Gibbon in England, history was formerly written with a careless regard for facts and with no adequate or systematic examination of the original sources. Writers aimed to make their narratives interesting by depicting the romantic and heroic elements of history, the deeds of kings and conquerors, the pomp and pageantry of courts, and the bloody horrors of battlefields. This has been well called the "drum and trumpet" style of history. Little attention was given to the true ethical significance of events, to the analysis of character, to the operation of cause and effect, or to the background of great events found in the life of the common people. A new historical method, evolved under the combined influence of science and democracy, has changed all this. The modern historian aims at breadth and accuracy of details, at the collocation and logical interpretation of vast aggre-

A New Historical Method

gations of facts, gathered, often, at the cost of prodigious personal labor; he makes the life of a common laborer as conspicuous as that of a lord, and celebrates the achievements of peace as zealously as those of war, presenting all phases of national life and character with impartial completeness. An excellent example of the new type of history is Green's "History of the English People," the title of which indicates the change of purpose and method. It is particularly creditable to American scholarship and letters that our first and greatest historians, Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman, while illustrating some of the qualities of the heroic type of history, from the beginning worked essentially in the spirit of the modern scientific method.

GEORGE BANCROFT

1800–1891

Although Jared Sparks is deservedly regarded as the founder of our historical school, it was George Bancroft who made the first contribution to the brilliant series of historical compositions now accepted as our standard masterpieces. Bancroft was one of thirteen children, whose father, the Rev. Aaron Bancroft, fought at Lexington and Bunker Hill, and wrote a "Life of Washington" that was not an unworthy rival of the more famous biography by Marshall. The son George graduated from Harvard at seventeen, by

request of the college continued his studies at Göttingen, and was one of the earliest in America to obtain a German university degree. While abroad he profited by the experience, then rare to an American, of meeting the great men of Europe, as Goethe, the Humboldts, Cousin, Lord Byron, Bunsen, and Niebuhr. After a year spent at Harvard as tutor in Greek, he joined with J. G. Cogswell in founding the famous "Round Hill" school for boys at Northampton. In the same year, 1823, he published a thin volume of "Poems," nearly all European in theme, and reflecting the influence of continental travel and of the reigning poets of the period.

Education; Teaching; Poetry

Before he abandoned the experiment at Round Hill, Bancroft had begun his life task. In 1834 the first volume of the "History of the United States" appeared, and during a period of fifty years the labor upon this work was continued, the final revised edition appearing in 1884. Seldom has so long a life of scholarly industry been given to a single task like this. He gathered a working library of twelve thousand volumes, with five hundred volumes of original and copied documents. The official positions which he held facilitated his studies by affording special privileges and opportunities for examining government records. Under President Polk, he served as Secretary of the Navy, and to him is due the founding of the Naval Academy at Annapolis. He

A Life Work

was sent as minister both to England and to Germany. In his public offices he served his country honorably and well, but the controlling motive of his life was the making and perfecting of his History. At the outset of this great literary undertaking he framed for himself the rigid rule, "to secure perfect accuracy in the relation of facts, even to their details and their coloring, and to keep truth clear from the clouds, however brilliant, of conjecture and tradition." Adherence to this rule made the work, for the period it covers, a standard authority.

Public Service

The History, in twelve large volumes, extends from the discovery of America to the founding of the new government after the Revolution. The two final volumes are devoted to the "Formation of the Constitution"; seven volumes are given to the Revolution, in the treatment of which the author's fine talent for the description of military and diplomatic events is especially prominent. The merits of this great work are many and substantial, the broad scope and well-defined conception of the theme, the strong and stirring qualities of the style arising from the author's sustained enthusiasm for his subject, the vast stores of information skillfully condensed into a clear and consecutive narrative. "One must follow him minutely," says Higginson, "through the war for independence to appreciate in full the consummate grasp of a mind that can deploy military events in a narrative as a general deploys brigades in a field.

Merits of the History

Add to this the capacity for occasional maxims to the highest degree profound and lucid, in the way of political philosophy, and you certainly combine in one man some of the greatest qualities of the historian."

But the defects of Bancroft are too prominent to be overlooked. He is too patriotic to be truly critical, he is too confident of perfection in all things democratic and American; he digresses too much, drawing the reader aside to listen to commonplace reflections in morals and philosophy; he makes unwarrantable and unscientific use of authorities in omitting all quotation marks; his style is often pompous and inflated, especially in the early volumes, revealing a conscious effort to reach a dignity and stateliness befitting his grand theme. His rhetoric, however, as well as other excesses, was much chastened by rigorous revision in the final edition, his taste having become severer with age. And yet, with all its sins upon it, the earlier edition of the History is to be preferred, for the blooming freshness and exuberance of his Americanism and profound faith in democracy give to the text a flavor of unrestrained sincerity that one cannot afford to exchange for the proprieties of a more modest style. Moreover, one easily condones the faults of a work that in its final impression must always be imposing and monumental.

Defects of the History

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT

1796–1859

Three years after the appearance of Bancroft's first volume, Prescott's "History of Ferdinand and Isabella" was published. This fascinating period of history had been neglected by European historians, and it was left for an American to give to the world the first comprehensive view of the reign of those two illustrious sovereigns, whose names are inseparably linked with the beginnings of American history.

William Hickling Prescott

William Hickling Prescott was born in Salem, Mass., in 1796. His grandfather was the Colonel Prescott of Bunker Hill renown, and his father was a lawyer, who, in Webster's opinion, stood at the head of the Massachusetts bar "for legal learning and attainments." While in college at Harvard, an accident, caused by the wanton carelessness of a class-

Early Misfortune

mate, deprived him forever of the sight of one eye. Soon after graduation the other eye was seriously affected, and he was condemned for life to partial blindness, with the ever-present danger of a total loss of sight. This cruel misfortune determined his life-work. Compelled to abandon his original purpose of becoming a lawyer, he decided after long deliberation to devote himself to literary work, notwithstanding the almost insurmountable difficulties certain to be encountered. Fortunately an ample income afforded him every advantage for testing the practicability of his choice.

There are in the history of letters few parallels to the heroic patience and resolution illustrated in the careers of our two most attractive historians, Prescott and Parkman, and the lesson of their lives is perhaps as valuable as their books. Such devoted careers are to be counted among the martyrdoms of literature. During all the years of his study and writing, Prescott was unable to use his eyesight in reading for more than two or three hours a day — sometimes for only thirty-five minutes a day, dividing this time into five-minute periods, separated by intervals of a half-hour, and often for months he could not look at a book. Nearly everything was read aloud to him by a secretary. He worked in a darkened room, and wrote with a noctograph, an instrument for guiding the hand with an ivory stylus over carbonized paper. In order that, by good health, he

A Heroic Life

might preserve the little sight remaining, he exacted of himself the strictest observance of self-imposed laws in respect to food, clothing, exercise, even the minutest matters of daily life. Yet throughout this life of darkness and self-denial, he maintained a cheerful and radiant temperament, charming and winning, by his beautiful character, the hearts of all who were privileged to know him.

On January 19, 1826, he recorded in his journal the decision to write upon the "Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella." Twenty years afterward he wrote against this passage, "A fortunate choice." In a letter to a friend, quoting Dr. Johnson's saying in his life of Milton, "that no man can compile a history who is blind," he said in respect to his decision: "Although I should lose the use of my vision altogether, by the blessing of God, if my ears are spared me, I will disprove the assertion, and my chronicle, whatever other demerits it may have, shall not be wanting in accuracy and research." He had already spent ten years in the study of general literature and modern languages, merely as a preparation for literary work, and the next ten years were given to this first Spanish theme. A library of material was gathered, and with painful toil he set to work to master it. At first he was obliged to employ a reader who knew not a word of Spanish. Of this experience he once said: "I cannot even now call to mind without a smile the tedious hours in which, seated under

Toilsome Preparations

some old trees in my country residence, we pursued our slow and melancholy way over pages which afforded no glimmering of light to him, and from which the light came dimly struggling to me through a half intelligible vocabulary."

Three years and a half were given to reading before the writing was begun, and three months were spent in making notes for the first chapter. To the work of revising and condensing he gave fully two years. At length, with many misgivings, he gave his history to the public, and its success was immediate and astonishing, not only at home but even in England, where the opinion still prevailed that it was impossible for a great book to be produced in America. "A success so brilliant," says Ticknor, "had never before been reached in so short a time by any work of equal size and gravity on this side of the Atlantic." Daniel Webster spoke of the author as "a comet which had suddenly blazed out upon the world in full splendor."

Publication of "Ferdinand and Isabella"

Prescott was led naturally by his Spanish studies to his next two themes, the first of which, the "Conquest of Mexico," was graciously yielded to him by Washington Irving, his only rival in the Spanish field. After six years of the same toilsome and scrupulous industry this work was published, and was followed, in 1847, by the "Conquest of Peru." His final and greatest undertaking, the "History of Philip II," for which he gathered a

Other Works

magnificent collection of books and manuscripts, was left unfinished at his death in 1859.

The severest charge against Prescott's histories is that they are too interesting to be true. In these days of scientific literalism, it is perhaps natural to regard with suspicion a historian who is read as freely as the standard novelists. But history was never written with a more conscientious respect for facts. Even in his most highly colored passages, Prescott can never, like Macaulay, be convicted of straining the truth for the sake of the rhetoric. He may have overestimated the ability of the early chroniclers to describe facts without perverting them with romantic coloring; but if he elevated his Aztecs and Peruvians to a plain of civilization not easily reconcilable with inherent probability or with the results of archæological research, it must be remembered that he did so upon the authority of those who had seen what they described.

Historical Accuracy

The perennial interest of these histories is due to the peculiar attractiveness of the subjects and of the style. The themes were happily chosen from the most glorious period of Spanish history, when the strange mingling of religious devotion with the love of conquest and romantic adventure gave to ordinary historic facts a tinge of the marvelous, investing such exploits as that of Cortez with what Irving called a "magnificent mirage." To style Prescott gave deliberate and careful attention, elaborating an artistic expression

that has been accepted as a standard of easy elegance and vivid picturesqueness. His narrative flows smooth and clear, like a deep stream in which objects are mirrored in strong outline. His figures are definite, concrete, objective; he loves color and action, the open field of war and adventure rather than the philosophy of cause and consequence. There is, too, a glow in his writing, rich and strong as the tropical sunlight of the regions he describes. The descriptions in "Ferdinand and Isabella" are at times overwrought in style, approaching dangerously near to "fine writing." But this overfastidious and too conscious attention to form was corrected in the "Conquest of Mexico" and the "Conquest of Peru." Here he was less restrained by the sense of classic propriety and less timid in the use of simple, idiomatic and salient phrases. These works, moreover, are like prose poems in the unity of subject, harmony of details, and artistic management of all the parts, constituting coherent and finished works of art. Whatever deduction may possibly be made from Prescott's work as history, through the more minute searchings of a later scientific method, its life is assured by its beauty and power as literature.

Prescott's Style

Reading and Discussion. — The Conquest of Mexico, or The Conquest of Peru.

Biography and Criticism. — Ticknor's "Life of William Hickling Prescott." Bolton's "Famous American Authors." Richardson's "American Literature," Vol. I. Whipple's "Es-

says and Reviews," Vol. II. Carpenter's "American Prose." Library of the World's Best Literature. Everett's "Orations and Speeches," Vol. IV.

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY

1814–1877

"The greatest, on the whole, of American historians was John Lothrop Motley," says Professor Beers, a judgment that seems to be justified by the monumental character of the "History of the Dutch Republic," a work possessing the same marks of high distinction that characterize the works of Froude, Freeman, Macaulay and Carlyle. Motley was born in a suburb of Boston, April 15, 1814. Among his early playmates were Boston's famous wit, Thomas Gold Appleton, and the silver-tongued orator, Wendell Phillips; with these companions he enacted impromptu dramas, and before he was eleven astonished them with the first chapters of a novel. He was a great reader, learned easily, especially languages, and was widely noted for his many gifts and striking personal beauty. At ten he went to the celebrated "Round Hill" school at Northampton, where he was taught German by George Bancroft, with whom he was unconsciously preparing to divide the earliest honors of historical scholarship in America.

Boyhood

At thirteen Motley entered Harvard, bearing with him the somewhat unfortunate reputation of being a remarkable scholar. He studied in a wayward manner,

being once "rusticated," read extensively after the bent of his own inclinations, and wrote juvenile poems, plays, and essays in abundance. After graduation two years were spent at the universities of Berlin and Göttingen, where he formed an intimate friendship with the young Bismarck, the future "iron chancellor" of Germany, a friendship that continued through life. **Education**

Returning from Germany he studied law for a time, but with no seriousness and no professional results. In 1837 he married, and two years later published his first novel, "Morton's Hope," a crude, ill-formed expression of youthful effusiveness, interesting, however, for its autobiographic revelations; for in the hero he was clearly drawing a portrait of himself. "I was always a huge reader," says the hero; "my mind was essentially craving and insatiable. Its appetite was enormous, and it devoured too greedily for health." Again says the hero: "I was ever at my studies, and could hardly be prevailed upon to allot a moment to exercise and recreation. I breakfasted with a pen behind my ear, and dined in company with a folio bigger than the table." **"Morton's Hope"**

In 1841 he began his disappointing diplomatic career with the position of Secretary to the United States Legation in Russia, which he resigned after a few months' residence at St. Petersburg. He was sent by President Lincoln as minister to Austria and by President Grant as minister to Eng- **Diplomatic Experience**

land; from both of these positions he withdrew under circumstances painful to himself and discreditable to the officials of the State Department at Washington. His brilliant social qualities and literary reputation won for him a distinguished circle of friends in every European capital where he resided; and American literature is honored by the inclusion of his name with the names of Irving, Bancroft, Lowell, Hawthorne, and Taylor, who have added to the fame of scholarship and letters the distinction of officially representing and introducing the culture of the young democracy to the old aristocracy of Europe.

For many years Motley studied in a desultory way, lacking the spur of necessity to induce concentrated and productive effort. But underneath the apparent aimlessness was a strong literary disposition and a taste for historical study by which he was being slowly guided to his great work. He published a historical essay of much merit on "Peter the Great," and braved criticism with a second novel, "Merry Mount." This was an improvement upon "Morton's Hope" and a fairly well-told story, upon a background of colonial history, that still has an interest for readers in search of local color in early New England. Finally his generous nature and intense love of liberty and of free institutions led him to his great theme. He had studied the struggle of the Puritans for religious freedom and its broader effects in the American Revolution, and he found a striking parallel

Choosing a Theme

in the struggle of the Netherlands against the tyranny of Spain. Moreover, while working in this field he would be tracing the principles of Americanism back to their original sources, a task to which his ardent patriotism strongly inclined him. "I had not," he said, "first made up my mind to write a history, and then cast about to take up a subject. My subject had taken me up, drawn me on, and absorbed me into itself. It was necessary for me, it seemed, to write the book I had been thinking much of, even if it were destined to fall dead from the press." Naturally bitter was his disappointment upon hearing that Prescott was writing a history of Philip II that would necessarily include his field. He visited Prescott and offered to abandon the subject, but the elder historian warmly encouraged his plan, offering him the use of his valuable collections, and in the preface to his work generously called public attention to the importance of the forthcoming work of the younger author.

Motley pursued his subject with unlimited energy and enthusiasm, spending several years of minute and exacting labor in the libraries and state archives of Europe in search of his material. For he had determined to base his writing entirely upon "original contemporary documents." The work when completed was to be called "The Eighty Years' War for Liberty," divided into three parts, "The Rise of the Dutch Republic," "The History of the United Netherlands," and "The History of the Thirty

The Great History

Years' War," a grand historical trilogy, describing a series of events filled with dramatic and thrilling interest, the climax of which was the turning-point of modern civilization. It was a magnificent theme, and Motley's treatment proved worthy of the theme. The first part appeared in 1856, and met with immediate success both in Europe and in America, being translated at once into Dutch, German, French, and Russian. Four years later the first volumes of the "United Netherlands" increased the fame and popularity already achieved. The "Life of John of Barneveld," intended as a kind of interlude between the final acts of the "Eighty Years' Tragedy," proved to be his last work. From the shock of his wife's death in 1874 he never fully recovered, and three years later he died, leaving the last act of the splendid trilogy unwritten.

Few writers have succeeded in making history as interesting as it is in these volumes of Motley. To say that the "Rise of the Dutch Republic" is as fascinating as a novel is not an exaggeration. He made the story of Holland, says Bryant, "as interesting as that of Athens and Sparta." The narrative is clear, strong, and picturesque, enlivened frequently with gentle humor and satire, revealing everywhere the earnest, sympathetic heart of the author. The description is "so brilliant, so full of life and color, that it seems to have caught something from the canvases of Rubens and Rem-

Motley's Style

brandt." Indeed, the chief charm arises from the author's warmth of feeling for his subject. His sympathy with the Dutch Protestants may perhaps have led him to be too severe in his judgments of their Catholic enemies, but even in his prejudices he kept a close hold upon facts. Dramatic intensity is united with scientific scholarship and masterly analysis. In the painting of great historical portraits, such as those of William the Silent, Philip, Queen Elizabeth, and Henry of Navarre, he rivals Macaulay.

Of the influence of personal character upon his work Whipple writes: "Those who knew him intimately read his works with the same delight that they listened to his conversation, when some great question of justice or freedom which had touched his heart stimulated all the faculties and evoked all the acquirements of his fertile and richly stored intellect, and when he poured forth his eloquence in a torrent of speech, every word of which was alive with a generous ardor for truth and right, and a noble disdain for everything false, mean, base, and cruel. As the historian of liberty in its early struggles with political and ecclesiastical despotism, every quality of his large and opulent nature found frank expression in his books. The reader of his works is therefore not only enriched by the new facts and striking thoughts he communicates, but by the direct communication of the author's soul to his own. That soul was the soul of a singu-

Effect of Personal Character

larly noble, sincere, honorable, and intrepid gentleman, who felt the mere imputation of a stain as a wound; and to the young men of the country intimacy with such a spirit through his writings cannot but exert a healthy stimulus on all that is best both in their exertions and their aspirations."

Reading and Discussion. — Rise of the Dutch Republic.

Biography and Criticism. — Holmes's "Life of John Lothrop Motley." "Correspondence," edited by G. W. Curtis. Whipple's "Recollections of Eminent Men." Carpenter's "American Prose." Richardson's "American Literature."

FRANCIS PARKMAN

1823–1893

Massachusetts has been the illustrious mother of American historians, and Harvard College their intellectual birthplace. Of these distinguished sons the one commanding the greatest present fame and popularity is probably Francis Parkman. He was born in Boston in 1823, and graduated from Harvard in 1844. While in college he caught something of the enthusiasm of Jared Sparks for historic research, and before his junior year had substantially determined the great undertaking that engaged henceforth his mental energies for fifty years. His life, like Prescott's, was one of marvelous struggle and endurance in the pursuit of his cherished purpose. A weakness of the eyes, complicated by a painful

A Devoted Life

nervous disorder, made him nearly blind. "The heroism shown year after year," says Fiske, "in contending with physical ailments was the index of a character fit to be mated, for its pertinacious courage, with the heroes that live in his shining pages."

A remarkable autobiographic fragment appeared after the death of Parkman, containing details of his work and singular sufferings, generally unknown to the public.[1] When a young boy he was absorbingly interested in natural science. At fifteen or sixteen "a new passion seized him," he says, writing of himself in the third person. "He became enamored of the woods — a fancy which soon gained full control over the course of the literary pursuits to which he was also addicted." At eighteen his plan "was, in its most essential features, formed," namely, of "writing the story of what was then known as the 'Old French War,'" the plan being enlarged later "to include the whole course of the American conflict between France and England, or, in other words, the history of the American forest."

Early Predilections

For the accomplishment of this great literary purpose he prepared himself with systematic and singular thoroughness. His reading and study were determined by the new ambition. In conversation and debates, according to a fellow-student, he showed "symptoms of 'Injun' on the brain." After gradua-

[1] *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, June, 1895, and Farnham's "Life of Francis Parkman," pp. 318, *et seq.*

tion he studied law, that he might be able to deal with the constitutional questions connected with his theme. His fundamental rule of work was to gather material, as far as possible, through personal observation; therefore for several years he studied the woods. Summer vacations were spent in the forests and in exploring trips. He would know the life of the wilderness just as the Indian knew it; so he studied details of rocks, trees, plants, fish, game, swamps, tangled thickets, windfalls, and mountain streams, not as a scientist, but as an acute observer, looking for the relationship between these things and the life of primitive, savage men. That he might endure the hardships of forest exploration he subjected himself to the most rigorous physical discipline, taking long and exhausting walks at a rapid pace, exercising violently in the gymnasium, and practicing horsemanship under a circus manager.

One part of his preparation was kept steadily in view. He must obtain an inside view of Indian character by a living contact with it. Accordingly in 1846 he went to the Rocky Mountains, and spent several months with a tribe of Dakota Indians, entering into every form of the wild life of primitive savages, as yet untouched by civilization. But the hardships were too great for his constitution. For weeks he rode over the Black Hills "reeling in the saddle with weakness and pain." From this expedition he returned with health permanently shat-

Life among the Indians

tered. "The light of the sun became insupportable, and a wild whirl possessed his brain, joined to a universal turmoil of the nervous system which put his philosophy to the sharpest test." It was a heavy price to pay for historic material, but the material proved to be precious, for it can never be duplicated. Of the real red men Parkman is the final historian. Twenty-five years after his thrilling experience he wrote: "The wild cavalcade that defiled with me down the gorges of the Black Hills, with its paint and war plumes, fluttering trophies and savage embroidery, bows, arrows, lances, and shields, will never be seen again."

At the very climax of his nervous disorder he began the "Conspiracy of Pontiac." Books and documents were read to him "at such times as he could listen to them, the length of each reading never, without injury, much exceeding half an hour, and periods of several days frequently occurred during which he could not listen at all. Notes were made by him with closed eyes, and afterward deciphered and read to him till he had mastered them. For the first half year the rate of composition averaged about six lines a day." Under similar conditions volume after volume of his great work was produced. He was himself what he pronounced his hero La Salle to be, "a grand type of incarnate energy and will." Physical suffering he endured with stoical fortitude, preserving a sane and cheerful temper by sheer self-

Painful Labor

compulsion. The agonizing nervous disorder he always referred to humorously as "the enemy," and from the torment of this enemy he was never wholly free. In later years his sight was "so far improved as to permit reading, not exceeding on the average five minutes at a time." During the periods — some of them extending to years — when literary work was entirely prohibited, he turned to gardening, becoming eminent especially in rose-culture, and teaching "even the lilies an unwonted florescence." Five times he went abroad to search the archives of France and England and gather documentary material, and by the aid of friends and competent assistants he did this work so thoroughly that no revision of his results is likely ever to be needed.

Soon after his return from the Rocky Mountains, Parkman published the "Oregon Trail," a captivating narrative of his thrilling experiences, more interesting than one of Cooper's novels, and even superior to Irving's "Captain Bonneville" and "Astoria" in the same field. The first of the series of his great historical narratives to be published (1851) was the "Conspiracy of Pontiac," though chronologically the last of the series, and a kind of sequel to the whole work; for in this volume it was his purpose "to portray the American forest and the American Indian at the period when both received their final doom." The theme of his whole work might be described as the rise and fall of the French

His Books

power in North America, or the struggle between the French and English for supremacy in the New World. The several parts of this theme, arranged in proper sequence, are "Pioneers of France in the New World"; "The Jesuits in North America"; "La Salle, or the Discovery of the Great West"; "The Old Régime in Canada"; "Count Frontenac, or New France under Louis XIV"; "A Half Century of Conflict"; "Montcalm and Wolfe"; and "The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian Wars after the Conquest of Canada."

Not a line of these twelve volumes was written without physical strain, yet the style is as free, joyous, and serene as if the work had been done under conditions of ideal comfort. Two things he determined to achieve in his writing, interest and accuracy, and the most excruciating pain could not swerve him from this ideal. In a preface he says: "If at times it may seem that range has been allowed to fancy, it is so in appearance only, since the minutest details of narrative or description rest on authentic documents or on personal observation." His love of truth "was almost a religion," says his biographer, "and his work might be taken as the altar of his self-sacrifice." He visited every important place described in his books. This fact, together with an intimate knowledge of nature, gives to his style a breezy, out-of-door freshness quite unique in historical literature. "His books fairly

Parkman's Style

reek with the fragrance of pine woods." In these respects he has the advantage of Prescott, who never visited any of the scenes of his books, and whose classic grace of style suggests at times the limitations of the library. Parkman is not less scrupulous with his style than Prescott, but he has more of the art of modern realism, possessing the power of so producing the illusion of reality, with all its vivid and picturesque possibilities, as to invest dry facts with the proverbial charms of fiction. In his portraiture he adheres strictly to facts, leaving inferences of motive and character to the reader. He seldom praises or sympathizes with his characters; his concern is with the deeds of men, not with their emotions or philosophy.

It may be too early yet to settle Parkman's position as a historian, but the estimate of his judicious fellow-historian Fiske cannot be far wrong: "Great in his natural powers and great in the use he made of them, Parkman was no less great in his occasion and in his theme. Of all the American historians he is the most deeply and peculiarly American, yet he is at the same time the broadest and most cosmopolitan. The book that depicts at once the social life of the Stone Age and the victory of the English political ideal over the ideal which France inherited from imperial Rome is a book for all mankind and for all time. The more adequately men's historic perspective gets adjusted, the greater will it seem. Strong in its individuality and like to nothing

Fiske's Estimate

beside, it clearly belongs, I think, among the world's few masterpieces of the highest rank, along with the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Gibbon."

Reading and Discussion. — The Oregon Trail; The Jesuits in North America, or Montcalm and Wolfe.

Biography and Criticism. — Farnham's "Life of Francis Parkman." "Francis Parkman's Autobiography" (*Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, June, 1895). Fiske's "A Century of Science and Other Essays." *Century Magazine*, November, 1892 (James Russell Lowell). Vedder's "American Writers of To-day." Gilder's "Authors at Home." Carpenter's "American Prose." Richardson's "American Literature." Library of the World's Best Literature. Roosevelt and Lodge's "Hero Tales from American History." Holmes's "Francis Parkman."

Other Historians

A full survey of American historical literature would include many authors of distinguished merit, some of whom fall little short of achieving the highest eminence. Richard Hildreth's (1807–1865) "History of the United States" has generally been regarded as a formidable rival of Bancroft's work, written from the point of view of a Hamiltonian Federalist, as Bancroft's is from that of a Jeffersonian Democrat. Aside from its partisan bias, which at times obliterates the judicial quality, it is valuable for reference and comparison; but it lacks the saving grace of style, and is, therefore, dry and forbidding reading. James Schouler's "History of the United States under the Constitution" and Henry Adams's "History of the United States, 1801–1817," are excellent works, dealing mainly with the political and constitutional development of the nation. Thomas Wentworth Higginson's "Larger History of the United States, to the Close of Jackson's Presidency," is a carefully studied narrative, written with the lucidity and grace of the author's delightful essays, and, therefore, eminently readable. Edward Eggleston

in his last years, devoted a well-trained literary gift to the writing of history; "The Beginners of a Nation" and "The Transit of Civilization" are the first volumes of an extensive work to be entitled "A History of Life in the United States," in which the "culture-history" of the people was to be given, with special fullness in the colonial period. The "History of the People of the United States," by John Bach McMaster, is modeled in style and method upon the histories of Macaulay and Green, and possesses many of the substantial merits of those masterpieces. It takes up the narrative of national progress where Bancroft left it, and, with an extraordinary supply of minute details, gathered by vast industry, unfolds the life of the people in all its phases with a fullness that makes the work indispensable for the period it covers.

Among the latest historians, John Fiske (1842–1901), perhaps, has given strongest promise of permanency and high rank. His ten volumes devoted to the colonial and revolutionary periods constitute a worthy monument to his scholarly research and literary attainments. The titles of the parts of his general scheme are: "The Discovery of America," "Beginnings of New England," "Old Virginia and her Neighbors," "The Dutch and Quaker Colonies," "The American Revolution," and "The Critical Period of American History." While not without distinction as an investigator of original sources, Fiske shows his strength mainly as a critical and judicial reviewer of the results of his predecessors, and as a master of clear exposition and of a style remarkable for its lucidity, simplicity, and force. Among histories of particular sections, John Gorham Palfrey's (1796–1881) "History of New England," is preëminent. It is, says Jameson, "probably the best single large piece of work that has been done in America on any part of our colonial period." His thoroughness, accuracy, extensive knowledge of original sources, and general skill in narration, have made it a standard authority. The monumental "Narrative and Critical History of America," of Justin Winsor, is, in the main, a collection of monographs by specialists, varying accordingly in interest and value. This author's

"Christopher Columbus," "Cartier to Frontenac," and "The Mississippi Basin," are scholarly contributions to our history of permanent worth. The colossal undertaking of Hubert Howe Bancroft, the "History of the Pacific Coast of North America," which already extends to fifty portly volumes, and for which the collection of original documents is the largest ever made for a similar purpose in America, is to be regarded rather as the rich material of history than as finished history. Among the historians, as well as anywhere, we may include George Ticknor, the biographer of Prescott, whose learned "History of Spanish Literature," published in 1849, remains still without a rival.

Biography

The most interesting, and, in many respects, the most valuable part of history is that which is written in the form of individual biography. The finest exponents of a nation's greatness are its great men; and it is the work of the biographer to record and perpetuate this illustrious portion of national life. American literature has no Boswells; biographical writing has generally been incidental to other literary work — no author has devoted his best energies exclusively to this form of composition; and yet we need make no confession of poverty in this department of our literature. William Wirt's (1772–1834) "Life of Patrick Henry" and John Marshall's (1755–1835) "Life of Washington," written early in the century, are venerable works, worthy of their great subjects. The inspiring and fruitful work of Jared Sparks was directed mainly toward biography. Irving poured his fine literary talents into the "Life and Voyages of Columbus," "Mahomet and his Successors," and "Life of Washington," books that still retain a substantial value in the press of modern competitors.

The most extensive and popular writer of biography in America is James Parton (1822–1891). His first work was the "Life of Horace Greeley," which Greeley himself declared to be "mighty interesting reading," and which the public demanded at the rate of thirty thousand copies a year. His next success was the "Life and Times of Aaron Burr," which is as

interesting to-day as when published in 1858. Other equally interesting and worthy biographies are his lives of Franklin, Andrew Jackson, and Thomas Jefferson. His last serious production was the "Life of Voltaire," the studies for which extended over a period of twenty years. The present tendency of biographical writing is illustrated in the two notable series, "American Statesmen" and "American Men of Letters," in which is found the work of many of the best contemporary writers and scholars. Of several autobiographic works in recent years, the finest is the "Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant," which, through the inherent interest of its matter, its strong, direct style, and its well-measured judgments of men and events, is likely to hold a permanent place in literature.

CHAPTER IX

THE METROPOLITAN WRITERS

In literature, as in commerce and society, the influence of great cities has become a formative force. The tendency of productive energy is toward the large commercial centers; their vast and varied aggregations of personality and competitive industry furnish a powerful stimulus to talent in every field. The metropolis is a world in itself, representative of the great outside world, from which it draws its sustenance. Human experience is here broadened and intensified, and human endeavor is correspondingly quickened. Here are the accumulated treasures of wealth, culture, and the arts. The intellectual life of the nation here flows in its highest and swiftest tides. Here are the great publishing houses, newspapers, and magazines. The author is brought into close touch with the market for his wares; he works in a thrifty, business intimacy with printer and publisher. And the allurement of these material advantages and opportunities draws cityward, with increasing power, writers who have begun the courtship of fame in quiet country homes.

The Great Centers of Life

But this gravitation of authorship to the metropolis is not without detriment to literature. Exposed to the contagious greed for material gain, authors are tempted to write down to a popular taste for sensational entertainment, impelled by the hope of large returns, instead of writing up to artistic standards, impelled and sustained by high ideals. Professional journalism more and more absorbs the best literary energy; writers of the finest gifts, drawn into its stimulating service, and trained in its methods of dexterous celerity for meeting the feverish demands of the public, dissipate their talents in hasty, ephemeral work. The spirit of commercialism invades the sanctity of art; a monetary standard is applied to the success of authorship. Authors become unwilling to "meditate the thankless Muse" and write for immortality, but meditate rather the application of business principles to literature, rapid production, quick returns and a watchful eye upon popular demand. The great danger to our literature to-day is this tendency to commercialize it.

Injurious Influences

The literature produced under these conditions will necessarily bear the stamp of its metropolitan origin, more or less strongly impressed according as the author masters or is mastered by his environment. In general it will be versatile, clever, and entertaining, revealing a sensitiveness to the complex influences of wealth and society; it will be cosmopolitan in theme, often highly

Qualities of Metropolitan Writing

finished in style, but impressional rather than scholarly, lacking in depth, and seriousness; sometimes merely experimental or eccentric, without coherence, system, or completeness; finally, it will be free from provincialism and deprived of the local color and personality that give strength to provincial writing. The best of the metropolitan literature is that which shows the struggle of the ideal with its material entanglement. Occasionally an author of resolute purpose, like Bryant, lives two lives, keeping a clear path through the low-lying plain of business to the uplands of poetry and dreams.

From every quarter of the winds authors have been gathering in recent years in great metropolitan New York. Early in the last century the presence of the Knickerbocker group made New York for a time the chief literary center, and now more widely pervasive forces have made it again the literary capital. In this restless throng of writers it is possible to distinguish two or three well-defined groups; the Poets, who succeeded the great New England singers, the Essayists, who like George William Curtis love to remember how Irving and Addison wrote, and the Story-tellers, who with remarkable fertility of resource cater to the capricious tastes of a public that divides its literary allegiance between the latest new novel and the latest new play.

Literary New York

Chief of the metropolitan group of poets are Bayard Taylor, Richard Henry Stoddard, Thomas Bailey

Aldrich, and Edmund Clarence Stedman. All were from the country, all were connected for better or for worse with city journalism, all show the restraining, entangling influences of metropolitan life upon their literary development. The recognized leader and inspirer of this brotherhood of city poets was Bayard Taylor, whose friendship is still a precious memory to the companions who have survived him.

BAYARD TAYLOR

1825–1878

From sturdy Quaker stock, Bayard Taylor was born at Kennet Square, Chester County, Penn., in 1825. A remote ancestor came over with William Penn. Through his mother he inherited a trace of German blood, to which fact is sometimes attributed his inclination toward Teutonic studies. His highest school privileges were found in a village academy. A phrenologist said to the father, upon glancing at the boy's head, "You will never make a farmer of him to any great extent; you will never keep him home; that boy will ramble around the world, and furthermore, he has all the marks of a poet." The passions that controlled his life were here correctly indicated. His earliest school essays were upon travel and foreign scenes with which his fancy was constantly busy. At fifteen he made his first tramp abroad, a trip on foot to the battlefield of

Early Inclinations

Brandywine, and a description of the trip in a local newspaper was his first publication. The next year he made his first appearance as a poet in the Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post*, the delicious sensations of which event are described in the novel, "John Godfrey's Fortunes." At seventeen he was apprenticed to a printer, and in the intervals of type-setting studied German, Spanish, and the English poets. In 1844 he published "Ximena," a little volume of poems, which, like the firstlings of so many other poets, were thoroughly regretted afterward. The title-page bore a significant quotation, "I am a Youthful Traveler in the Way." The book won for him a few literary friends and a little money, with which means he was enabled to engage in an adventure that brought success and fame.

Willis's "Pencillings by the Way" and Longfellow's "Hyperion" fortified his determination to realize the golden visions of Europe with which his mind was filled. With one hundred and forty dollars and a few promises from newspaper editors to accept his descriptive letters, he crossed the ocean and spent two years in Europe, tramping "upwards of three thousand miles." He endured many hardships, traveling "with but a sheet of paper between him and starvation," as Greeley described it, learning how to live upon six cents a day, but reveling in the knowledge and culture that flowed in upon his mind. "It was his university education," says his biographer.

Upon his return in 1846 his letters to the *Tribune* and other papers were gathered into a volume, with the title "Views Afoot; or, Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff." Success was immediate and triumphant. The indomitable pluck displayed, the simple vigor of style, and the poetic enthusiasm delighted the public, and the author found himself at twenty-one a literary hero. He soon formed a connection with the *Tribune*, which continued through life. "Rhymes of Travel" was published in 1848, and in 1849, the epoch-marking year of the "gold fever," he went to California to describe for readers of the *Tribune* the wild life of the mining camps. The next year brought to Taylor his first profound knowledge of grief in the death of his young wife, the "radiantly beautiful" Mary Agnew. In her grave, says Smyth, he "buried the first period of his literary life."

The Beginning of Fame

Taylor now yielded again to the enticements of foreign travel, and made an extended trip through the Orient; nor did his visits to the Old World cease until he had explored every region of popular interest, from Japan and the peaks of the Himalayas to Iceland, the Cape of Good Hope, and the White Nile. Eleven volumes, a veritable "library of travel and adventure," are the fruits of these wanderings. He was an ideal traveler. Wherever he went he learned the language and entered with boundless enthusiasm into the life of the people

An Ideal Traveler

From Constantinople he wrote: "I wear the tarboosh, smoke the Persian pipe, and drop cross-legged on the floor with the ease of any tailor whatever. I determined to taste the Orient as it was, in reality, not as a mere outside looker-on, and so picked up the Arabic tongue, put on the wide trousers, and adopted as many Eastern customs as was becoming to a good Christian."

Bayard Taylor

But Taylor's work in these interesting volumes of travel was perishable. He wrote, not as a student of history or antiquities, but merely as a reporter, aiming to give vivid pictures of foreign scenes, full of true life and color. Such books are quickly read and quickly forgotten. Their wide popularity in the author's lifetime came to be a source of keen discomfort, for while his highest ambition was to be numbered among the great American poets, the public persisted in regarding him only as "the great American traveler."

Taylor was always moved by a strong love for his native Chester County, and on his final return to America he purchased a large tract of land, including

the old homestead, and built a stately home, which he named "Cedarcroft." In 1857 he had married Miss Marie Hansen in Germany, and he now gathered his parents and sisters into one large family. But like Walter Scott, in the pride and joy of home-building on a princely scale, he planned beyond his means, and "the home that he had longed for and toiled for became a burden and a weary weight, prematurely ending his overtaxed life."

"Cedarcroft"

It was this home at Kennet that furnished mainly the materials for his three novels, "Hannah Thurston," "John Godfrey's Fortunes," and "The Story of Kennet." The first was a satire on the reform efforts of the period, teetotalism, vegetarianism, spiritualism, and abolition. It reached a wide popularity, was praised by Hawthorne, and even inclined the London *Spectator* to "suspect that Bayard Taylor had placed himself in the first rank of novelists." His best novel, "The Story of Kennet," is an idyllic tale, redolent of the beautiful fields about "Cedarcroft." The characters were drawn from life, some of them from his own family, and the story was drawn from his deepest affections. "The lovely pastoral landscapes," he says, "have been copied field for field and tree for tree." Many short stories and sketches were contributed to the magazines, and some of his best prose is found in his literary criticism. Prose, however, was his money

His Novels

making drudge; his artistic pains he reserved for poetry.

Few men of English speech have equaled Taylor in the mastery of the German language and literature. For many years he devoted himself zealously to the study of Goethe and Schiller, whose biographies he planned to write. In 1869 he was elected to a lectureship on German literature in Cornell University, and in 1870 he published his translation of Goethe's "Faust," the finest version yet produced in the English language. Its special merits are sympathetic interpretation and strict fidelity to the text. The thought, the subtle poetic feeling, and the musical harmonies are preserved, in the exact original meters, with marvelous skill and perfection. It is, indeed, a reproduction in English, rather than a translation. Moreover, it is a scholarly piece of work, the vast critical literature surrounding the poem having been thoroughly mastered, as shown by the excellent notes.

Translation of "Faust"

The poetic gift was held sacred by Taylor; to him, as to Wordsworth, it was the "faculty divine." To poetry, therefore, he gave the best that was in him, and upon it he based his highest hopes of permanent fame. His finest thought, feeling, and ideals, his generous manhood, love of nature, home, and kindred, his passion for perfection, his deep religious philosophy, are fully expressed in his verse. Unlike Lowell, he never permitted humor to

Devotion to Poetry

disturb the meditations of his Muse. His frolicsome wit was indulged only in poetic recreations, like the exceedingly clever parodies in the "Echo Club." The rich, ruby-colored "Poems of the Orient," published in 1854, full of fire, passion, and sensuous delight in beauty, proved his lyrical gift. In this volume was the "Bedouin Song," one of the supreme love lyrics of the language: —

From the Desert I come to thee
On a stallion shod with fire;
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand,
And the midnight hears my cry:
I love thee, I love but thee,
With a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

The collection entitled "The Poet's Journal," contains a revelation of the poet's domestic happiness, and opens with a graceful dedication "To the Mistress of Cedarcroft," who is asked to judge his poems —

Before they try the common air of song.
Fame won at home is of all fame the best:
Crown me your poet, and the critic's wrong
Shall harmless strike where you in love have smiled,
Wife of my heart, and mother of my child!

The most popular of the long poems is "Lars: A Pastoral of Norway," a delightful idyllic narrative, of which Stedman says: "We have no idyl of similar

length, except 'Evangeline,' that equals it in finish and interest." The "Home Pastorals and Ballads," like his novels, testify to Taylor's abiding love for his native Chester. Three dramatic poems mark the highest reach of his poetic ambition, "The Prophet," "The Masque of the Gods," and "Prince Deukalion." In these, especially the last, which was his swan song, are embodied his profoundest thought and loftiest spiritual aspiration.

The yoke of incessant labor under which Taylor lived during his last years was lightened somewhat by the honors that came in recognition of his eminence in letters. At the dedication of the Gettysburg monument, he gave the ode, and his "Centennial Ode," at the opening of the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876, in the lofty Pindaric measure, was in thought and style worthy of the great occasion it celebrated. In 1878 he was sent as minister to Germany. The unique fitness of the appointment was recognized by a universal expression of congratulation. This seemed to him the beginning of a new era in his life, when with honors, leisure, and troops of friends, the well-earned accompaniments of old age, he might consummate some of the great purposes toward which his soul had long been yearning. But it was only the beginning of the end. His splendid constitution had broken under the strain of unremitting toil, and death overtook him a few months after his arrival in Berlin.

Public Honors

Taylor was the most versatile of American authors. Only Holmes can be compared with him in this respect. He was traveler, lecturer, journalist, critic, translator, novelist, poet. The whole gamut of literary activity he sounded, and with distinction. But his versatility and omnivorous interests were his misfortune, for they prevented that devoted concentration necessary to the production of work of immortal greatness. Taylor's original work in its varied forms has almost every quality short of greatness. His splendid productive energies were wasted upon commonplace work. His working capacity was enormous; he wrote always with a rushing rapidity, and often fifteen hours a day; his published works number fifty-two volumes. But he respected his profession, and the purity, honesty, and aspiration that friends found and loved so much in him as a man are found everywhere in what he wrote. The last line of "Epicedium," written of Bryant, was as true of himself: —

The Bane of Versatility

> And his first word was as noble as his last.

If the poetry of Taylor is lacking in originality, echoing too clearly the notes of other poets, if his sonorous diction is at times too rhetorical, it is distinguished for technical skill and finish, rich effects of sound and color, force in objective picturing, lyric ease and grace and charm, qualities that constitute an individuality of real living

Poetic Qualities

power. His subtle effects of alliteration and interlinear rhyme, his splendid rhythm in such poems as "Canopus" and "The Lost Crown" are not easily surpassed.

A throne of gold the wheels uphold,
Each spoke a ray of jeweled fire;
The crimson banners float unrolled,
Or falter when the winds expire.

This deft and flawless workmanship leads Richardson to think that after Holmes, Taylor "was at once the most natural and most accomplished American master of the purely lyrical art since Poe. The melodies of the infinite song rang in his ears." As to his relative rank Beers says: "All in all, Taylor may unhesitatingly be put first among our poets of the second generation — the generation succeeding that of Longfellow and Lowell."

Class Study. — The Poet in the East; Bedouin Song; The Song of the Camp; Wind and Sea; The Lost Crown; Nubia; Canopus; "Moan, ye Wild Winds"; Metempsychosis of the Pine; The Quaker Widow; Proposal; The National Ode.

Class Reading. — *Poetry:* Lars: a Pastoral of Norway; Eric and Axel; Amran's Wooing; August; The Old Pennsylvania Farmer.

Prose: Views Afoot; The Story of Kennet.

Biography and Criticism. — "Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor," by Marie Hansen Taylor and Horace E. Scudder. Smyth's "Bayard Taylor" (American Men of Letters). Wilson's "Bryant and his Friends." Stedman's "Poets of America." Richardson's "American Literature."

Poets' Tributes. — Whittier's "Tent on the Beach." Read's "Home Pastorals" (character of Arthur). Stoddard's "To

B. T." and "To Bayard Taylor, on his Fortieth Birthday." Aldrich's "Bayard Taylor." Longfellow's "Bayard Taylor." Cranch's "Bayard Taylor."

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

1825–1903

Bayard Taylor's closest friend in the city group of writers was Richard Henry Stoddard, a lyric poet whose clear-voiced melodies have not received their due meed of praise. He was born in Hingham, Mass., in 1825, and in early childhood found a permanent home in New York. There was little in the conditions of his youth to encourage the taste for letters, but he early set his face toward Arcady, and for more than half a century he dwelt within her fitful and bewitching shades. He attended the city schools, then worked by day in an iron foundry, and by night studied the poets. In 1849 he published a little volume of poems called "Footprints," and in 1852 a second collection, more truly representative of his qualities. Through the kindly aid of Hawthorne, he obtained a place in the New York Custom House, which he retained seventeen years. After this service he gave himself unreservedly to literature.

Early Struggles

It was Stoddard's happy lot to marry a gifted woman, who has written poems of sterling worth, and three powerful novels, "The Morgesons," "Two Men," and "Temple House," the last of which is regarded

by Leslie Stephen as one of the most remarkable books of the age. But these books were born out of due time, and their original and striking qualities did not catch public favor; they contained some of the strongest features of realism and of the intense method of Ibsen, before realism and Ibsenism had appeared as literary creeds.

Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard

In the "Hymn to the Beautiful," a poem that recalls Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," Stoddard tells us how the spirit of beauty possessed him even in youth: —

From earliest infancy my heart was thine,
With childish feet I trod thy temple aisles;
Not knowing tears, I worshiped thee with smiles,
Or if I wept it was with joy divine.
By day, and night, on land, and sea, and air,
I saw thee everywhere.

In 1856 appeared "Songs of Summer," by which his fame was established, "the most specifically poetic book of verse," in Stedman's judgment, "produced in this country up to that time, and the one most worth having for its melody and artistic beauty." If the passionate love of beauty and the prodigal fancy suggest Keats, there is also evidence that the poet was developing a clear, spontaneous expression, soon to be recognized as his own. In this volume is the familiar "Flight of Youth": —

There are gains for all our losses,
There are balms for all our pain;

and such gemlike felicities as this: —

The sky is a drinking-cup,
That was overturned of old,
And it pours in the eyes of men
Its wine of airy gold.

We drink that wine all day,
Till the last drop is drained up,
And are lighted off to bed
By the jewels in the cup!

A Lyric Poet

Stoddard's gift is essentially lyric, but he has attempted the epic successfully in the form of the ballad and the metrical tale. "The King's Bell" is a pleasing narrative poem, in smooth-flowing and graceful verse, presenting the heavy thought of the limitations of human happiness. His loftiest lyrical efforts are a centennial ode, "Guests of the State," a Phi Beta Kappa poem, "History," read at Harvard College, and a noble Horatian ode, "Abraham Lincoln," which, says Vedder, "one is inclined to pronounce, not only the best thing Stoddard has ever written, but the best thing any poet has written on Lincoln, saving only Lowell's unapproached 'Commemoration Ode.'" But it is by his bright, sweet songs that he is best known, "a skylark brood whose notes are rich with feeling." A personal note is struck in the sequence of little lyrics entitled "In Memoriam," which are heart-melting in the simple and direct expression of grief. Stoddard's father was a sea captain, and his earliest

years were spent near the ocean; these facts may explain the frequency with which he turns to this theme in his poems. The beauty and mystery of the multitudinous seas are always exercising their charm upon him. It was perhaps the recognition of this lifelong influence that led him, in the collection published in 1880, intended as the definitive edition of his poems, to place at the end the beautiful "Hymn to the Sea," in which the curling ripples on the sand and the sounding beat of surf are alike reproduced in the finely varied rhythm of his verse.

> Summer and winter are alike to thee,
> The settled, sullen sorrow of the sky
> Empty of light; the laughter of the sun;
> The comfortable murmur of the wind
> From peaceful countries, and the mad uproar
> That storms let loose upon thee in the night
> Which they create and quicken with sharp, white fire,
> And crash of thunders! Thou art terrible
> In thy tempestuous moods, when the loud winds
> Precipitate their strength against the waves;
> They rave, and grapple, and wrestle, until at last,
> Baffled by their own violence, they fall back,
> And thou art calm again, no vestige left
> Of the commotion, save the long, slow roll
> In summer days on beaches far away.

Like Taylor, Stoddard has been a prodigious writer of prose. Much of it is excellent literary criticism and biography, and his reminiscences of American authors are especially valuable. But this writing is too often merely the product of personal need or the publisher's

demand for timely "copy," and forms but a perishable memorial of a life of conscientious and toilsome literary industry. So long as there are independent souls, like Taylor and Stoddard, who in a metropolis given over largely to the ideals of mammon dedicate themselves wholly to literature, to live by it and to die by it, there is hope of the higher life for art and society. The devotion, denial, and struggle of such lives render them in the highest sense heroic.

Prose Work

Class Study. — The Flight of Youth; Hymn to the Beautiful; The Sky is a Drinking-Cup; Birds; The Dead; "Along the Grassy Slope I Sit"; The Sea — "You stooped and picked a Red-lipped Shell"; A Rose Song; Summer and Autumn; Adsum; Abraham Lincoln; Hymn to the Sea.

Class Reading. — The King's Bell; Wishing and Having; Youth and Age; You know the Old Hidalgo; Miserrimus; An Old Song Reversed; At Gadshill; The Country Life; Irreparable.

Biography and Criticism. — Vedder's "American Writers of To-day." Gilder's "Authors at Home." Bolton's "Famous American Authors." *Critic*, July 6, 1895, and April 3, 1897. Stedman's "Poets of America." Halsey's "American Authors and Their Homes."

Poets' Tributes. — Taylor's "Epistle from Mount Tmolus, to Richard Henry Stoddard" and "To R.H.S." Edith M. Thomas's "O Most Reverend of All the Singing Throng." Riley's "O Princely Poet."

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

1836-1907

Thomas Bailey Aldrich, our poet par excellence of delicate and polished measures, the "American Her-

rick," belongs with the New York poets who were his early friends and associates, although his name is commonly associated with Boston. He was born in 1836 in picturesque old Portsmouth, N.H., and there spent his early youth. The history of those years is given in "The Story of a Bad Boy," the most delightful bad boy in literature, whose story charms old and young alike. (Lowell wished the little book "had been twice as large.") The financial misfortunes of the family deprived him of a college education. At eighteen he went to New York, where he spent the first three years as a clerk in a mercantile house. But day-books and ledgers were not the books he was born to live by. In 1855 he published a little volume of poems, "The Bells," and the next year appeared that lyric of melting tenderness, "Baby Bell," by which he is universally known. He obtained an editorial position on the *Home Journal*, read manuscripts for the publishers, wrote stories for the magazines, and worked faithfully at the refinement of his art. He early showed a tendency toward that perfection of form and style for which his work, in both prose and verse, is especially distinguished.

"The Story of a Bad Boy"

In 1870 Aldrich removed to Boston to become the editor of *Every Saturday*, a literary periodical that proved to be too good to live beyond its fourth year. In 1881 he succeeded Howells in the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and sustained for nine years

the traditional excellence of that honorable office. During this period he wrote the prose works that have given him high rank among writers of fiction. "Marjorie Daw, and Other Stories," published in 1873, established his reputation for artistic short stories. The title story is a masterpiece, unsurpassed for originality of conception, refined and graceful style, and artistic completeness. It has been translated into French, Spanish, German, and Danish. His longer stories, hardly elaborate enough to be called novels, are "Prudence Palfrey," "The Queen of Sheba," and "The Stillwater Tragedy." An appetizing volume of sketches of European travel is called "From Ponkapog to Pesth," the journey having begun at Ponkapog, the place of his pretty country home, a few miles from Boston. The salient qualities of Aldrich's prose, well described by Vedder, are "a deftness of touch, a sureness of aim, a piquancy of flavor, a playfulness of wit, a delicacy of humor, that make it perfectly delightful reading. No other of our writers has caught so much of the spirit of French prose, save Henry James; and Aldrich deserves the praise that, while he has learned from the French all that they have to teach, he has still remained essentially American."

Editorial Work; Novels

A collection of poems appropriately entitled "Cloth of Gold" appeared in 1874, the "Proem" of which describes the poet as one who—

deftly weaves
A tissue out of autumn leaves,
With here a thistle, there a rose.

With art and patience thus is made
The poet's perfect Cloth of Gold.

This was followed by "Flower and Thorn," "Mercedes," a tragic drama, which won a brief success on the stage in 1893, "Wyndham Towers," a long narrative poem, and "The Sister's Tragedy." In narrative poetry his skill is at its best in "Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book," a beautifully versified tale, enveloped in mediæval atmosphere. More strength is found in "Judith and Holofernes," in which is revived after a thousand years the theme of a Saxon poet.

His Poetry

The qualities of his genius are not suited to long compositions. He condenses his thought and focuses it into a brilliant, gleaming point of expression; hence his sonnets are excellent, some of them, as Howells has said, worthy of being numbered among "the great sonnets of the language." He compresses poems into epigrams, life stories into dainty quatrains —

Four-line epics one might hide
In the hearts of roses.

But that his powers are equal to more sustained lyrical efforts in the higher forms is shown in the memorial ode, "Spring in New England," one of the finest poems inspired by the Civil War. The closing stanza, with its symbolic picture of returning peace and joy, suggests Lowell's spring music: —

Hark! 'tis the bluebird's venturous strain
High on the old fringed elm at the gate,
Sweet-voiced, valiant on the swaying bough,
Alert, elate,
Dodging the fitful spits of snow —
New England's poet laureate
Telling us spring has come again!

Aldrich is our master miniature painter in verse. No other American poet has imposed upon himself such rigid restraints of perfect workmanship. If large things have not been attempted, it may have been because he believes in the supreme beauty of small things. After all, a dewdrop is as wonderful as the ocean. His working theory seems to be expressed in a quatrain "On Reading ——" (it may have been Browning, or Whitman): —

Artistic Refinement

Great thoughts in crude, unshapely verse set forth
Lose half their preciousness, and ever must.
Unless the diamond with its own rich dust
Be cut and polished, it seems little worth.

His genius is well rooted in the New England soil, but it roams freely and afar in search of sweet and beautiful things, catching often the warmth and color of the Eastern sunshine. Pervading the pure, chill atmosphere of his native earth, there is an aroma of Orient spices and fruits and tropical gums. Of this he writes in the sonnet "Reminiscence": —

Though I am native to this frozen zone
That half the twelvemonth torpid lies, or dead;

Though the cold azure arching overhead
And the Atlantic's never-ending moan
Are mine by heritage, I must have known
Life otherwhere in epochs long since fled;
For in my veins some Orient blood is red,
And through my thoughts are lotus blossoms blown.

The poetry of Aldrich, says Lathrop, "is the poetry of luxury more than of deep passion, or profound conviction in special directions; yet it is spontaneous as the luxury of bud and tint in springtime. His predilection is for the picturesque, with touches of fancy, occasional lights of humor so reserved and so dainty that they never disturb the pictorial harmony, tinges of Eastern color, and hints of distant romance. Sometimes a simple miniature picture without incident or reflection — as in 'The Lunch' — suffices him. Sometimes it is a little narrative finished with microscopic care, sometimes a song, light as thistledown and swayed by a passing mood, that engages him. But always the same artistic conscience and fastidious nicety in expression are maintained." Between his poetry and that of Herrick there is more than a passing resemblance, and his praise of the English poet might well return to himself, for his own brief lyrics, not less than Herrick's lyric gems, are crystal clear, fresh and musical as brooks in May —

Critical Estimate

And polished as the bosom of a star.

Class Study. — Baby Bell; Before the Rain; After the Rain; Nameless Pain; Sea Longings; The Voice of the Sea;

Sleep; Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book; Appreciation; Comedy; Cradle Song; Spring in New England.

Class Reading. — *Poetry:* Piscataqua River; When the Sultan goes to Ispahan; Carpe Diem; Footnotes: A Book of Quatrains; Pursuit and Possession; The Undiscovered Country; On an Intaglio Head of Minerva; The Guerdon; A Petition; Unsung; An Old Castle.

Prose: Marjorie Daw, and Other Stories; Prudence Palfrey.

Biography and Criticism. — Vedder's "American Writers of To-day." Bolton's "Famous American Authors." Gilder's "Authors at Home." Bayard Taylor's "Essays and Notes" and "To T. B. A. and L. W." Richardson's "American Literature." *Critic*, Vol. VIII (George P. Lathrop).

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

1833-1908

The poet and critic, Edmund Clarence Stedman, came to New York from Hartford, Conn., where he was born in 1833. At Yale College he held high rank in Greek and English, and won a prize with a poem on "Westminster Abbey." He left college without graduating, entered journalism, served as a war correspondent, and worked faithfully in newspaperdom for twelve years before he fully learned the irreconcilable difference between writing the ephemeral daily "story" for the light-minded millions and building "the lofty rhyme" for that "fit audience though few" for whose praises every true poet strives. He has since expressed the judgment that "if a poet or aspiring author must

Journalism

labor for the daily subsistence of a family, it is well for his art that he should follow some other calling than journalism." Meanwhile he published, in 1860, "Poems, Lyric and Idyllic," containing the original and spirited ballad of the time, "How Old Brown took Harper's Ferry"; and in 1864, "Alice of Monmouth," a narrative poem of the war, which has more claims upon popular favor than merely the dashing "Cavalry Song," which alone seems to have survived.

With the purpose, doubtless, of obtaining more surely and swiftly the coveted leisure for literature, Stedman began business in Wall Street in 1864, and there he remained thirty-six years, the "Banker Poet," whose singing voice during those years has gradually died away. But if the voice of the poet has become silent, the voice of the clear, ripe-minded critic has been heard with increasing satisfaction. Valuable as are some of his lyrics, drawn from the life of city and nation, his chief contribution to our literature is likely to be the magnificent body of criticism contained in "The Victorian Poets," "The Poets of America," and "The Nature and Elements of Poetry." These three volumes, the last of which was originally presented as a course of lectures at Johns Hopkins University, constitute a critical history of English poetry in the nineteenth century, supplemented appropriately by a profound treatise on the theory and practice of the poetic art. For

The Banker Poet

breadth, thoroughness, and completeness, we have nothing to surpass or to equal this work.

As a critic, Stedman is clear and incisive in analysis, sympathetic in appreciation, almost unerring in discriminating the beautiful and artistic, eminently sane and just in his conclusions, always stimulating and helpful. He does not possess the style of Lowell, nor the rich creative thought and underflow of humor, but he has the compensating power — which Lowell did not have — to plan and execute a systematic scheme of critical work, maintaining throughout the whole a remarkable certitude and equipoise of judgment. If he has a fault, it is in being too kind, at times enveloping his subject in "a golden atmosphere of generous appreciation" that tends to obscure rather than disclose the naked truth. For any serious study of modern poetry, these volumes of critical essays are now indispensable.

His Criticism

As a poet, Stedman has not kept faith with the public or himself, for his early poetry was full of promise. It showed the modern composite spirit, sensitive to the appeal of culture in every form, and a strict regard for artistic workmanship. His gift was lyrical, and his most popular poems are the patriotic lyrics called forth by the war. In the dark days of 1862, when the Federal armies were falling back in defeat and the Northern heart was heavy with discouragement, Stedman's "Wanted — A Man" rang out like a trumpet call.

His Poetry

Give us a man of God's own mold,
Born to marshal his fellow-men;
One whose fame is not bought and sold
At the stroke of a politician's pen;
Give us the man of thousands ten,
Fit to do as well as to plan;
Give us a rallying-cry, and then,
Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN.

His lyrics in lighter vein, such as "Pan in Wall Street," "Country Sleighing," and "Toujours Amour," graceful, musical, and humorous, must continue to be favorites. And of the serious poems, "Hawthorne" is still the noblest poetic tribute paid to the memory of "The One New-Englander," a poem in which the author's critical and imaginative faculties are seen in happy combination; descriptive analysis and poetry are finely blended in such stanzas as this: —

Two natures in him strove
Like day with night, his sunshine and his gloom.
To him the stern forefathers' creed descended,
The weight of some inexorable Jove
Prejudging from the cradle to the tomb;
But therewithal the lightsome laughter blended
Of that Arcadian sweetness undismayed
Which finds in Love its law, and graces still
The rood, the penitential symbol worn, —
Which sees, beyond the shade,
The Naiad nymph of every rippling rill,
And hears quick Fancy wind her willful horn.

Class Reading. — How Old Brown took Harper's Ferry; Pan in Wall Street; Wanted — A Man; Gettysburg; Kearny at Seven Pines; Cavalry Song; Toujours Amour; Laura, My

Darling; Surf; Song from a Drama; Hawthorne; The Discoverer; The Undiscovered Country; The Hand of Lincoln; Creole Lover's Song; Guests at Yule.

Biography and Criticism. — Vedder's "American Writers." Bolton's "Famous American Authors." Richardson's "American Literature." Taylor's "Essays and Notes." *Bookman* July, 1896 (Hamilton W. Mabie). Halsey's "American Authors and Their Homes." Stoddard's "To Edmund Clarence Stedman."

RICHARD WATSON GILDER

1844–1909

The term "minor poet" always implies a more or less invidious comparison, especially when applied to the younger poets who may yet place themselves among the great ones. Then, too, one true poem is enough to make a poet, as shown in the case of Gray. But it is difficult so to refine the critical faculty as to see that ultimate rank is determined, not by bulk or prominence, but by quality. Among the later poets who have achieved distinction is Richard Watson Gilder, for many years editor of the *Century Magazine*, whose first volume, "The New Day" (1875), revealed a poet of refined feeling and delicate workmanship suggestive of a literary kinship with Aldrich. Of this volume and the second collection, 'The Poet and his Master," Stedman says: "Each is a cluster of flawless poems, — the earlier verse marked by the mystical beauty, intense emotion, and psychological distinctions of the select illuminati. He appears to have studied closely, besides the most ideal English

A Poet of Refinement

verse, the Italian sonnets and canzoni which ever deeply impress a poet of exquisite feeling. An individual tone dominates his maturer lyrical efforts; his aim is choice and high, as should be that of one who decides upon the claims of others."

Class Reading. — The Sonnet; "Rose Dark the Solemn Sunset"; Love's Jealousy; The Voice of the Pine; Music and Words; How Paderewski Plays; The Sower; "Fades the Rose"; On the Life Mask of Abraham Lincoln.

Minor Poets

Associated with the metropolitan poets by kindred tastes or personal friendship are several verse-makers, who deserve some studious attention for the sake of a few notable poems that we could not afford to lose. With Taylor are associated three Pennsylvania poets. Thomas Buchanan Read (1822–1872), painter, as well as poet, will always be known by his "Sheridan's Ride," although other poems, like "Drifting," better prove his qualities. George Henry Boker (1823–1890) won the almost unique distinction in America of writing plays of real literary merit, one of which at least, "Francesca da Rimini," has attained wide success upon the stage. Charles Godfrey Leland (1824–1903), an authority upon gypsy lore, is known chiefly as the author of the "Hans Breitman Ballads," written in the dialect of the Pennsylvania Dutch.

The older writers in New York still recall the delightful literary receptions at the home of Alice (1820–1871) and Phœbe (1824–1871) Cary, whose poems of sentiment and the domestic affections are sweet and tender, if not highly poetical. One of Phœbe's earliest poems, "Nearer Home" ("One sweetly solemn thought") has reached a world-wide popularity. Somewhat similar is the work of Mrs. Julia Ward Howe (1819–1910), the author of our great war lyric, the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." This poem recalls another patriotic singer, who has been unworthily neglected, the author of the "Bay Fight," Henry

Howard Brownell (1820–1872), whose "fine Norse-hearted poems" Lowell commended. Among the later poets of the metropolis who are distinguished especially for the art sense, is Edgar Fawcett (1847–1904), whose collections of verses, "Fantasy and Passion" and "Song and Story," are likely to outlive his many works of fiction. The dramatic critic, graceful essayist and poet, William Winter (1836–1917), shows in his little collection, "Wanderers" (1888), a sweet and true lyric spirit, summoned to its most felicitous expression in elegiac and commemorative verses. He may be justly regarded as belonging, as he himself desires, "to that old school of English lyrical poetry, of which gentleness is the soul and simplicity is the garment."

Among poets affected predominantly by the life of large cities, there is a natural tendency to cultivate that graceful form of poetry, called somewhat vaguely, "Vers de Société." Poems of this type must be short, refined, and fanciful; playful rather than serious in tone, though often sounding notes of pathos and the deeper sentiments; crisp and sparkling in rhythm, with frequent rhymes; seemingly spontaneous, though fashioned with deft and delicate workmanship; touching lightly the gay, fashionable, brilliant, trivial, humorous, or sober topics that make up the staple of social converse. In London, Praed, Locker, Thackeray, Calverley, and Dobson represent this art of elegant trifling with verse, and in America its perfect master is Dr. Holmes. John Godfrey Saxe (1816–1887), once a familiar figure in New York society, wrote humorous and popular verse, much of which was in this vein. Such verse is well represented by Aldrich's "On an Intaglio Head of Minerva," Stedman's "Toujours Amour," Lowell's "Without and Within." Several of the younger verse-makers have shown a delightful aptitude for these dainty trifles, adopting often the old French forms, the ballade, rondeau, triolet, and vilanelle. Such are H. C. Bunner's "Airs from Arcady," Samuel Minturn Peck's "Cap and Bells," Frank Dempster Sherman's "Madrigals and Catches," and Clinton Scollard's "With Reed and Lyre."

Vers de Société

THE ESSAYISTS

The essay as a distinct form of literary expression has been seriously affected, if not almost effaced, by modern journalism. In place of the deliberate, thoughtful, and artistic treatment of topics vitally related to the pursuits or convictions of the writers, we have "articles," sketchy, gossipy, critical, statistical, or paradoxical — anything to catch public attention and fill the time between railway stations. Too generally, the studious essayist has given way to the trained journalist, who watches the inclinations of the public, as a sailor watches a shifty wind, guiding his pen, not by his own independent and sincere thinking, but by the ephemeral and spasmodic thinking of the multitudes for whom he caters. Such writers develop remarkable alertness and versatility, and dash off "timely" articles for the daily newspapers or the monthly magazine with skill, and often with suggestions of literary qualities. But little of this writing survives as literature. A pathetic illustration of this prodigal use of the literary gift is seen in the meager prose product of Taylor and Stoddard, hundreds of whose articles passed swiftly into oblivion with the event that called them forth.

The Essay and Journalism

Essays may be loosely classified as critical, historical, and miscellaneous. The first class is represented by Matthew Arnold and Lowell. Since Stedman's two priceless volumes, we have had little of worth in this

class, for the perfunctory "book-review" seldom reaches the dignity of criticism. For the second class stands Macaulay, with whom thus far we have no one in America to keep fellowship. The third class includes the versatile and vivacious writers who treat with ease and grace social, moral, æsthetic, literary, or humorous themes, wisely but not learnedly, with a light touch, but with a sure purpose, aiming at the human rather than the intellectual side of life. Between the "Spectator" and the "Autocrat" there is a true kinship, notwithstanding the intervening range and variety of essay writing. The philosophical essays of Emerson hardly constitute a class, being in reality a system of philosophy in fragments, and their chief influence being exerted independently of their philosophy.

Three Classes

The periodical essay of the eighteenth-century type was attempted in Dana's "Idle Man," Irving's "Salmagundi," and Mitchell's "Lorgnette." But with the growth of the monthly magazines the essay naturally took its place with poems and stories in the monthly menu. In the early days of the monthlies, the days of *Putnam's Magazine*, the *Galaxy*, and the *Atlantic*, before the "process" picture had been discovered and the "illustrated" magazine with text written to illustrate the illustrations had been devised, authors contributed to the periodicals essays from their richest literary resources. And to the magazines we still have to look, among the

The Magazines

pictures and the "timely" sensations, for occasional essays of the true type. Among the essayists especially associated with the magazines, a unique and commanding position was held by George William Curtis, the lineal literary descendant of Addison, Lamb, and Irving.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

1824–1892

Like so many of the New York writers, Curtis was a New Englander, born in Providence in 1824. Reminiscences of his early school-days at Jamaica Plain, near Boston, appear in his novel "Trumps." At fifteen New York became his permanent home. Two years, from eighteen to twenty, he spent at Brook Farm, having imbibed the idealism of the Transcendentalists from Emerson's lectures. Here he studied German and music with great zest, drove the cows with Hawthorne, trimmed the lamps at the "Eyrie," and with chivalrous courtesy hung out the clothes for the women on stormy washing days in winter. The qualities that characterized his whole life were im-

George William Curtis

pressed at this time upon the memories of his companions, generous-heartedness, refinement, zeal for knowledge and culture, sane and eager idealism. The elegance of his personal manners is recalled, and his personal beauty — the beauty of a "young Greek god."

Educational Experiences

The influence of Emerson drew him to Concord, where he spent a year, dividing his time between farming and study, and confirming his ideals of life by contact with the poets and philosophers who gathered weekly in Emerson's library. Here he would wander, he says, "in the soft, sunny spring, in the silent Concord meadows," or sit "in the great, cool barn through the long, still, golden afternoons, and read the history of Rome." His "budding hopes" were now turning toward the Old World, and in 1846 he went to Europe, and there spent four years, including Palestine and the Nile in his studious and leisurely wanderings. This experience, which closed the formative period of his life, was an admirable preparation for the broad career awaiting him in the promotion of culture. "I find that my European life," he noted in his diary, "has taught me a cosmopolitanism which I could never have learned at home."

The literary career of Curtis began upon his return from Europe with the publication in 1851 of the "Nile Notes of a Howadji," followed by "The Howadji in Syria." Hawthorne wrote: "I see now that you are forever an author." So it proved, for the pen was

never afterward laid aside. In these books, he says, "I aimed to represent the essentially sensuous, luxurious, languid, and sense-satisfying spirit of Eastern life," and to this purpose he adapted the style, ornate to excess, brilliant with an artificial beauty, like the scenery of a stage-play, appropriate however to the romantic scenes for which it serves as a background or reflecting medium. The language is like a fabric of Persian colors, shot with tinsel of gold, and charged with the perfume of cassia and magnolia bloom. It was the first flower of rich, imaginative youth, opening under the warm, sense-charming influences of the East. Associated with these books, through the title and somewhat also in the style, was "Lotus-Eating," a series of light sketches of the fashionable American summer resorts, interesting still as a picture of social life now extinct. In 1853 came the "Potiphar Papers," a caustic satire upon the ostentatious society of the period in New York. Three years later appeared "Prue and I," a "singularly perfect production," the graceful and luminous expression of an ideal philosophy for everyday use. The separate papers first appeared in *Putnam's Magazine*, and a contemporary thus recalls them: "When we received one of them we chirruped over it, as if by some strange merit of our own we had entrapped a sunbeam." And readers will still find sunbeams in this delicious little volume of old-fashioned wisdom. Here

Beginning of Authorship

"Potiphar Papers"; "Prue and I"

was the real Curtis as he was ever after known and loved in literature and life; here we recognize the gentle smile, the melodious voice, the easy urbanity and incomparable gentlemanliness of the philosopher of the "Easy Chair." Here, too, the writing reached perfection. "The opulence and extravagance of the 'Howadji' books disappear; but the rich imagination, the sportive fancy, the warm and life-giving sentiment, the broad philosophy are expressed in a style of singular beauty, flexibility, and strength." Here was the fine-grained, large-hearted champion of the true, the pure, and the good, of whom Lowell wrote: —

> Whose humor's honeyed ease
> Flows flecked with gold of thought,
> Whose generous mind
> Sees Paradise regained by all mankind.

Curtis took charge of the "Easy Chair" in *Harper's Monthly* in 1854, and became editor of *Harper's Weekly* in 1863; these positions he held uninterruptedly until his death in 1892; the first was in line with his development as a student and man of letters, the second represented a totally different field in which a large part of his energy was spent, the work of political reform. He early became a popular lyceum lecturer, and took an active part in the antislavery agitation. He then became a reformer, and a reformer he remained all his life. The second volume of "Orations and Addresses" is perhaps the most important record of recent political

A Reformer

life in America that we possess. It contains the finest addresses of Curtis upon the subject of political reform, to which he gave the best of his thought and energy during the last twenty years of his life; and it might well serve as a national textbook of political right-mindedness. Curtis was made chairman of the first Civil Service Commission, appointed by President Grant, and from that time he was the recognized leader of the civil service reform movement. For this new cause he fought as he had fought for emancipation, believing the tyranny of the politician second only to the tyranny of the slave driver in its baneful effects upon public morals and national character. In his public addresses he always aimed "to set forth a high ideal, to apply it to some duty actually pressing, and to stir and strengthen the hearts of his hearers for the task the duty imposed." He was an idealist, but his idealism was tempered by a well-informed judgment that placed more importance upon the improvement of actual conditions than upon the creation of ideal conditions. "Zealous he was," says his biographer, "in the noblest and completest fashion, but never a zealot, not blind nor rash, nor obstinate, nor conceited. He was as anxious to be right as he was determined in what, with an open mind, he had decided to be right."

Unlike most political orations Curtis's orations are literature, full of the fruits of scholarship, permeated with the literary spirit, and composed in a style care-

fully polished, yet free from every artifice of the "oratorical" manner. He aimed at effects through the simple impression of thought; hence there is no loss in the reading except the persuasive charm of the speaker's personality, the sense of sincerity and fairness expressed in his manner, and the power of an exquisite voice modulated like a musical instrument to every varying tone of thought and sentiment. Among his finest public addresses are those delivered upon memorial occasions, such as the splendid tribute to Lowell, his last public utterance.

Orations

Curtis's literary influence was exerted mainly through those unique and charming chats from the "Easy Chair." Art, music, literature, history, higher politics, society shams, personal anecdote, and reminiscence furnished topics. They are lay-sermons in little, always gracious and graceful, abounding in wholesome criticism, sound sense, and true feeling, always stimulating the impulses toward a higher life of refinement and culture. The style is the style of the man, talking easily with his thousands of listeners, with candor and courtesy, with a fine respect for the susceptibilities of his hearers, teaching and preaching without betraying any signs of teacher or preacher, always serious yet always genial. No reader ever entered the presence of the "Easy Chair" without feeling the effects of a peculiar warm, sunny, inspiring atmosphere of refinement. Hundreds of these little essays were written during

"The Easy Chair"

a period of more than thirty-five years, but it was the severe judgment of the author that only a few were worthy of republication in permanent form. Three small volumes have been selected "From the Easy Chair." These with three volumes of "Orations and Addresses," and a volume of "Literary and Social Essays" represent his maturer literary labors. One feels it to be a pity that such gifts did not find broader literary expression in permanent form. His patriotism compelled him to subordinate literature, yet the effect of his literary work, though diffused and indefinable, has nevertheless been real. "He rendered to American literature," says Cary, "a service unrecognized and untraceable, but singularly, perhaps uniquely, great."

Class Reading. — Prue and I; Essays from the Easy Chair, First Series; Oration on Wendell Phillips.

Biography and Criticism. — Cary's "Life of George William Curtis" (American Men of Letters). William Winter's "George William Curtis: A Eulogy." Chadwick's "George William Curtis." Godwin's "Commemorative Addresses." Howells's "My Literary Passions." Lowell's "Epistle to George William Curtis." Cranch's "To G.W.C."

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

1823–1911

Associated with Curtis through a moral and literary kinship is Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a loyal son of Massachusetts, the inheritor of some of the best

virtues, as well as two of the best names of the Puritans. Like Curtis, Higginson received from the Transcendentalists a strong impulse toward idealism and reform. Throughout his varied career as an extreme antislavery agitator, Unitarian minister, colonel of the first black regiment in the Civil War, champion of woman's rights, popular lecturer, historian, essayist, poet, — in every form of public activity or literary industry his work exhibited the lofty spiritual ideals that characterize the Cambridge group of writers with whom he was associated in lifelong and friendly companionship.

A Reformer

Higginson remarks somewhere that "positive force of writing or of speech must come from positive sources — ardor, energy, depth of feeling or of thought." This force, together with an admirable style, is found in his essays, "Out-door Papers," "Atlantic Essays," and "Oldport Days," and in his excellent novel of New England life, "Malbone, an Oldport Romance." In these volumes there is a pleasant and healthy mingling of the beauties of nature with the beauties of books. Essentially a man of letters, yet he seeks his best inspiration in the fields and woods from the "sculptured chalices of the mountain laurel" and the "clear, calm, interrupted chant of the wood-thrush, falling like solemn waterdrops from some source above." His many volumes, into the latest of which, especially, is written much of himself and of the history of his

Literary Work

time, as in "Cheerful Yesterdays" and "Contemporaries," though lacking the element of greatness, are sure of a place among the best on our shelves, by virtue of their conscientious fidelity to high standards of literature and life.

Class Reading. — The Procession of the Flowers; April Days; A Charge with Prince Rupert; The Puritan Minister.

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER

1829–1900

One of our most popular essayists is Charles Dudley Warner, who in the intervals of leisure permitted by a long editorial career produced a dozen volumes of prose possessing a distinctive flavor that always pleases the cultivated taste. He was born in Plainfield, Mass., in 1829, graduated from Hamilton College, practiced law a few years in Chicago, and in 1860 became the editor of the *Hartford Press*, afterward of the *Courant*. In 1870 appeared "My Summer in a Garden," a book which, as the *London Quarterly* generously admitted, "Charles Lamb might have written if he had had a garden." Its finished style, illusive suggestiveness, and delicate humor fixed the author's reputation at once as an American humorist of the higher type. "Saunterings" followed in 1872, a collection of graphic European sketches, in which, as Whipple said, "he not

Humorous Essays

merely addresses his readers; he takes them with him." His first literary triumph was repeated with "Backlog Studies," a series of sparkling conversations in the light of the evening fire, on love, literature, and questions of the day.

Warner's descriptions of travel, in his own and other lands, are characterized by the bright and playful fancy and genial humor of the essays. "My Winter on the Nile" and "In the Levant" belong with the "Howadji" books of Curtis. One feels in reading his autobiographic "Being a Boy," that it was well worth while to have endured the austerities of a Puritan boyhood in order to be enabled to write such a book. The "Life of Washington Irving" is a judicious piece of biographical and critical work of much value. His last books, the novels "Their Pilgrimage," "A Little Journey in the World," and "The Golden House," though possessing the characteristic graces of his earlier manner, in the lack of constructive power and in the interest of detached scenes, show that the most natural vehicle of his thought was the essay. As a humorist his qualities, as defined by Richardson, make his place secure among humorists of the finest type. "His humor is not wit; he pleases by the diffused light which illuminates his writings on various themes, not by any startling or sensational effect. American humor, as displayed in his masterpiece, 'My Summer in a Garden,' is shown in its better estate. Warner's intel-

Books of Travel; Novels; Humor

lectual kinship is with Irving, Curtis, and Holmes, not with Artemus Ward or Mark Twain."

Class Reading. — My Summer in a Garden; Backlog Studies.

DONALD GRANT MITCHELL

1822-1909

A pleasant aroma hangs about the queer signature "Ik Marvel," like that of crushed rose petals in an old volume of poetry. The "Reveries of a Bachelor" and "Dream Life," lightly connected sketches and reminiscences in the form of essays rather than of stories, are books for the young of all ages. If they are somewhat old-fashioned in style and sentiment, they are still interesting to every one who is not ashamed of indulging the softer side of his nature occasionally with fancy and feeling. They are summer afternoon books, full of the romance, sentiment, and dreamy, rose-hued thoughts of youth; out of tune with the realistic literature of to-day, but ever in tune with genuine, imaginative, and spontaneous natures, uncontaminated by the bitterness and disillusionments of real life.

A Pleasant Sentimentalist

Donald G. Mitchell began his literary career with the satirical sketches of New York society in the "Lorgnette," in the manner of the "Potiphar Papers." He early chose the life of country quiet, building his home, "Edgewood," on a farm near New Haven, Conn., and combining the love of books and the

love of nature in practical farming. "My Farm of Edgewood," "Wet Days at Edgewood," and "Rural Studies" are the literary product of this bucolic life. Some one has called him "the Horatian classic of American letters." His chatty volumes of "English Lands, Letters, and Kings" and "American Lands and Letters," while of little value as original contributions to literature, are pleasing records of the literary diversions of one who in old age does not lose any of his young enthusiasm for books. In spirit and style Mitchell belongs to the school of Irving. "There is the same genial, sympathetic attitude toward his readers; the same tenderness of feeling; and in style that gentle elaboration, and that careful, high-bred English which contrasts so strikingly with the brusque, nervous manner now in fashion."

Class Reading. — Reveries of a Bachelor; Wet Days at Edgewood.

Josiah Gilbert Holland, 1819–1881

To the period of sentimental and didactic writing belong the voluminous works of Josiah Gilbert Holland, the first editor of *Scribner's Monthly*. He wrote pleasant stories in verse, — "Bitter Sweet" and "Katrina," — and pleasant novels, — "Arthur Bonnicastle" and "Sevenoaks," — and several volumes of essays of a mild didactic character, such as "Timothy Titcomb's Letters to Young People," "Lessons in Life," "Gold-foil hammered from Popular Proverbs." He moralized everything that he wrote, using a simple and homely style, befitting the common-place topics of his essays and the common-place people to whom he addressed himself. For a time his works were immensely popular, and nothing better marks the swift change of literary

tastes and ideals within a single generation than the comparative oblivion into which Holland's works have fallen.

Criticism was for many years vigorously represented in the magazines by Richard Grant White (1821–1885), whose "Shakspere's Scholar," "Studies in Shakspere," "Words and Their Uses," and "Everyday English" show a lively aptitude for bookish discussion, the value of which is often sacrificed to the author's self-assertiveness. White's chief service to Shaksperian criticism was in rebuking the excesses of annotation and conjectural readings. A more sane and helpful Shaksperian critic was Henry Norman Hudson (1814–1886), whose "Life, Art, and Characters of Shakspere" is a standard work of great value. The greatest monument to American esteem for Shakspere is Horace Howard Furness's "Variorum" edition of the plays. Lounsbury's (1838–) scholarly and exhaustive "Studies in Chaucer" shows the high standard reached in philological work. Philology is finely represented by James Hadley's (1821–1872) "Essays, Philological and Critical," and by William Dwight Whitney's (1827–1894) "Oriental and Linguistic Studies" and "The Life and Growth of Language." In the wider field of criticism Edwin Percy Whipple (1819–1886) stands quite alone as a writer who made criticism his professional life-work. He gave dignity and scholarly worth to American critical writing, and such volumes as "Literature of the Age of Elizabeth," "Literature and Life," and "American Literature and Other Papers" are eminent for clear analysis, pointed and vigorous style, and sane judgment. Although literary criticism tends to deteriorate into the hasty "book reviewing," and no writer now devotes himself to this form of writing with the exclusive thoroughness of Whipple or Stedman, yet its seriousness as a department of prose writing is sustained by an occasional volume, exhibiting scholarly care in analysis and interpretation. Such are Henry James's "French Poets and Novelists," Howells's "Modern Italian Poets," Boyesen's "Essays on German Literature," Lodge's "Historical and Political Essays," and Woodberry's "Makers of Literature."

Essays in Criticism

WALT WHITMAN

1819–1892

To the metropolitan group of writers may as well be assigned the unclassifiable and unprecedented writer, Walt Whitman, who called himself a "Manhattanese," and boastfully claimed to be a representative of the nation, whom a few devoted followers regard as a prodigy of genius, and whom the greater number of his readers regard as a prodigious literary freak. A study of this unsatisfactory personality affords a valuable lesson in the fallibility and perversity of literary criticism. Burroughs declares Whitman to be "the most imposing and significant figure in our literary annals," and a more recent critic sees in him "a most horrid mountebank and ego-maniac" who "has given utterance to the soul of the tramp"; Stedman numbers him "among the foremost lyric and idyllic poets," while Lanier finds him to be merely "poetry's butcher," who offers as food only "huge raw collops cut from

Walt Whitman

A Troublesome Character

the rump of poetry, and never mind gristle." We might, perhaps, without serious violence to our record, take Whitman at his word when he warns his readers not to regard his verses "as a literary performance, or attempt at such performance." But such is the persistency with which the quality of greatness has been thrust upon him by eminent writers whose critical sanity is elsewhere above suspicion, it is necessary to reckon with this singular character and set forth if possible his true qualities.

Whitman's writing was in a peculiar way an intimate part of his life. "I celebrate myself, and sing myself," he veraciously declared. He was born at West Hills, Long Island, in 1819, and died in Camden, N. J., in 1892. From early years his life seems to have been a free and easy one, unrestrained by social duties or professional ambition. "I loaf and invite my soul," he says, "I lean and loaf at my ease." He learned printing and carpentry; lived some years in Brooklyn, where he built houses and wrote for the newspapers; roamed extensively in the streets of New York, and studied metropolitan life from the top of a Broadway omnibus. He made an extended trip on foot through the South and West and Canada. During the war he served in the army hospitals, where exposure brought on a severe illness from the effects of which he never fully recovered. From 1865 to 1874 he held a government clerkship in Washington, and thereafter spent his remaining years

A Vagrant Life

at Camden in easy penury and the quiet enjoyment of fame as "the good gray poet."

"Leaves of Grass" first appeared in 1855, and under this title all of his poetical work is now collected. The new poet made his theatrical début, thus heralding himself: —

> No dainty dolce affettuoso I.
> Bearded, sunburnt, gray-necked, forbidding, I have arrived,
> To be wrestled with as I pass for the solid prizes of the universe.

And to the spotted hawk swooping across his vision he cries ecstatically: —

> I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
> I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

A few readers, startled by this strange sound, looked into the book, found its crudeness and vulgarity "untranslatable" indeed, and it dropped out of notice.

A Would-be Reformer

But new editions appeared, and disciples of the new prophet arose, and his advertisement began in spirited critical controversy. Whitman proclaimed himself a literary reformer, and, like the reformers of the French revolution who to make way for their new republic abolished all existing institutions from the calendar to the Almighty, he abolished all conventions of art, morals, and religion, renouncing all poetry and poetic principles precedent to his own And with this result: —

> Land of the ocean shores! land of sierras and peaks!
> Land of boatmen and sailors! fishermen's land!

Inextricable lands! the clutched together! the passionate ones!
The side by side! the elder and younger brothers! the bony-limbed!
The great women's land! the feminine! the experienced sisters and the inexperienced sisters!
Far breath'd land! Arctic braced! Mexican breez'd! the diverse! the compact!
The Pennsylvanian! the Virginian! the double Carolinian!
O all and each well loved by me! my intrepid nations! O I at any rate include you all with perfect love!

To accept this as poetry requires us to readjust our ideas of the fundamental principles of poetry as they have existed since Homer. Burroughs, the most eloquent and persuasive apologist of Whitman in America, admits that "Leaves of Grass" is "bound to be a shock" to the majority of readers which he "would fain lessen." But great art needs no apology. Whitman's motive — so far as he could have had any conscious artistic motive — is formulated for him by Stedman: "He has been feeling after the irregular, various harmonies of nature, the anthem of the winds, the roll of the surges, the countless laughter of the ocean waves. He tries to catch this 'undermelody and rhythm.'" Granting this, it would be difficult to force even a fraction of his unmeasured word-meanderings into any sort of accord with the rhythmic beat of nature's melodies. It is too palpable a paradox to assert that his egotistical assault upon poetic principle was an inspiration from the "har-

His Apologists

monies of nature." Indeed in view of his undoubted love for nature, it was cruel that his prayer — "Give me, O nature, your primal sanities" — should not have been more plenteously answered.

Bayard Taylor's early judgment of Whitman still serves as a fair summary of the man and his poetry: "Yes, there is something in him, but he is a man of colossal egotism." There is something stimulating in his intense Americanism, and in his all-embracing faith in the future of democracy. There is something in his contention for individualism, and the complementary notion of comradeship, "a superb friendship," which is to unite all classes when brought into perfect harmony on the plane of the "average man." There is something of real force and value in his peculiar eruptive descriptions, especially of nature, "flashes of reality" in which he records genuine experience. As an epithet maker his admirers call him Homeric. His diction, as Stedman notes, when "on its good behavior, is copious and strong, full of surprises, utilizing the brave, homely words of the people." There are lines and passages, and, in his later work, whole pieces that are poetical in all but form. Such is "The Mystic Trumpeter," and such the opening invocation of "From Noon to Starry Night":—

His Merits

> Thou orb aloft all-dazzling! thou hot October noon!
> Flooding with sheeny light the gray beach sand,
> The sibilant near sea with vistas far and foam.

And tawny streaks and shades and spreading blue;
O sun of noon refulgent! my special word to thee.

The war experience served somewhat to ennoble Whitman's life and purify his writing, for out of it came his nearest approaches to poetic feeling and expression of the highest order. In "Drum Taps" is his finest work. Here are the Lincoln memorial poems, "O Captain, My Captain," and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," which Stedman in a moment of ardent admiration declares to be "exquisitely idyllic" and worthy of a place beside Lowell's "Commemoration Ode." It is noteworthy that his best work always conforms most nearly to the established laws of poetry. "O Captain, My Captain," the only poem that has reached real popularity, contains all the technical features of verse.

War Poetry

Whitman's excellences, however, seem to be lapses from the normal effort of his mind. He was the victim of his own theories; the poetry in his nature was submerged in egotism. His ignorance and uncouthness must not be mistaken for primordial simplicity and hirsute strength. In spite of his boasted cosmic breadth he is narrow; his ideas are few and repeated excessively. His long processions of disjointed sentences, sweeping over vast areas of unrelated facts, are not to be accepted as broad vistas of nature and life. The thought is incoherent, and what looks like profundity is often little

His Demerits

short of inanity. The crude inadequacy of his representation of ideal democracy will be recognized by a comparison of his chantings with Lowell's address on "Democracy." Of society in a broad sense he knew little; a few common types, sailors, printers, teamsters and stage drivers he knew perfectly. Refinement did not attract him, and scholarship he flouted. It is a tenet of modern realism that the common and vulgar are to be exalted into the realm of art without the circumambient atmosphere of ideality. In the lower atmosphere of realism Whitman lived and had his being. He was utterly devoid of humor, or he would have been spared pages of grotesque commonplace.

> The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt for me,
> I tuck'd my trouser-ends in my boots and went and had a good time.

His realism is often animalism. To him all physical functions are divine and fit subjects for poetry; hence some of his "savage songs" are without the modesty and taste usually found among savages. His plainness is only nakedness; of the real significance of the nude in art he had no comprehension. "I believe in the flesh and the appetites," is the beginning and the end of his creed.

The chief difficulty in accounting for Whitman is to take him seriously. The conviction is forced upon one that at the outset of his career as a literary re-

former he was a poseur, striking strange attitudes before the public to secure a sensational celebrity. He had been writing poetry of the ordinary type and stories in readable prose. But this work brought him no fame, being of only moderate merit; hence he would compel fame by an impudent experiment upon the reading public, adding to the effect by always appearing upon the streets with slouch hat and open-necked flannel shirt. Flattered by the praise of Emerson and a few others, and stimulated by criticism, he soon became confirmed in his affectations. Special vindication came from certain English writers who, listening for some strange note in accord with their preconceived notions of what our "native wood-notes wild" should be, found their ideal in Whitman; to their minds the "howling wilderness of American democracy" now had its poet.

A Probable Explanation

What may be the final effect of Whitman's work is still a matter of critical controversy. He wished to be the people's poet, but the people will have none of him. The true people's poets are Longfellow and Whittier. Under his sham and vulgarity there is unquestionably a vein of native ore that is worth working with patience. Gosse summarizes him as "literature in the condition of protoplasm," and his amorphous chantings as "poems in solution." Stevenson, in an essay of temperate admiration, concludes that "a great part of his work, considered as verse, is poor, bald stuff; considered, not

Critical Verdicts

as verse, but as speech, a great part of it is full of strange and admirable merits — a most surprising compound of plain grandeur, sentimental affectation, and downright nonsense." A common attitude toward him — perhaps the permanent one — is that of Dowden: "He disturbs our classifications. He attracts us; he repels us; he excites our curiosity, wonder, admiration, love; or our extreme repugnance. He does anything except leave us indifferent. However we feel towards him, we cannot despise him. He is a 'summons and a challenge.' He must be understood and so accepted, or must be got rid of. Passed by he cannot be."

Class Reading. — O Captain, My Captain; The Mystic Trumpeter; Pioneers, O Pioneers; Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking; The Centenarian's Story; Ethiopia Saluting the Colors; When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd.

Biography and Criticism. — William Clarke's "Life of Whitman." Burroughs's "Whitman, a Study." Kennedy's "Reminiscences of Whitman." Donaldson's "Whitman, the Man." Gilder's "Authors at Home." Symonds's "Walt Whitman, a Study." Stedman's "Poets of America." Stevenson's "Familiar Studies." Gosse's "Critical Kit-Kats." Dowden's "Studies in Literature." Wendell's "Literary History of America." Ernest Rhys's "Introduction" (Poems of Walt Whitman — Canterbury Poets). Hubbard's "Little Journeys." Cheney's "That Dome in Air." Holmes's "Walt Whitman's Poetry: A Study and a Selection."

CHAPTER X

PRESENT SCHOOLS AND TENDENCIES

THE paramount literary interests of to-day are unquestionably centered in fiction; indeed, the marvelous vogue of the novel is the most significant literary fact that marks the opening of the new century. The wide extension of the reading habit, the cheapening of books and periodicals, the stimulating of intellectual curiosity by the ubiquitous newspaper, and the American temperamental necessity for mental occupation in moments of leisure, all work together to produce a vast audience to which the novelist caters with confidence. A successful novel now reaches a sale of hundreds of thousands of copies, and the comfortable fortunes suddenly brought to the authors seem to belie the traditions of starving authorship, or relegate them to a mythological past. Moreover, novel-writing is not confined within professional bounds. Everybody with a creative mind and literary taste writes novels, or tries to do so. Doctors, lawyers, judges, bankers, generals, college girls, professors, and ministers compete for the prizes of the fiction market.

Universality of Novels

Other forms of literature are weakened, if not alto-

gether destroyed, by this plethora of fiction. The novel takes the place of the epic, and robs lyric poetry of its just rights in personal emotion. Drama has entirely succumbed to its power, and history can hardly retain a foothold, except as a background for the creations of the story-teller. The novel is to the present age what the drama was to the Elizabethan; it is the abstract and brief chronicle of the times, and much more. Every event, theory, problem, or question of public interest, social, moral, religious, political, or psychological, is exploited and explained in the pages of the novel. It divides with the newspaper the work of furnishing universal instruction and entertainment.

In this remarkable development of fiction American authors have reached a distinguished eminence. While perhaps the work of no one author stands out prominently with the unmistakable marks of immortal greatness upon it, a very high average of artistic attainment has been reached by many authors. If it be true in general of the fiction of the English language that never within the past century were there so few great writers in this department, it is more certainly true that never before were there so many good writers. American fiction to-day possesses characteristic features that are quite as distinctly marked as the characteristics of European fiction. It is indigenous and increasingly representative. In its breadth, variety, freedom from

The American Novel

precedent and fidelity to common life, it is democratic, and in its ideal aims, elevated tone, and versatile energy, it is genuinely American. If our novels have not the power and intensity of the Russian, they are free from the brutal coarseness of the Russian; if they lack the literary grace and artistic finish of the French, they are free from the subtle poison of the literary morals of the French. The novel, however, is not so distinct in its representative qualities as the short story. Since its beginning with Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe, the American short story has developed a popularity unparalleled in other literatures, and an artistic excellence unequaled in any literature except the French.

The general tendency of contemporary fiction is to focus attention upon small areas of human activity. A single novel of Dickens or Thackeray sometimes contains fifty or sixty characters, the old plan of the novel being a vast canvas crowded with figures and incidents; the novelist now concentrates his powers upon a few leading characters, presenting only such minor characters and details of background and environing incidents as will contribute to the adequate interpretation of the main figures in his plot.

Realism

This tendency is only a phase of the prevailing passion for more knowledge and more truth. Hence we have the principle of "realism" in fiction, a name given to the effort of authors to make literature a more accurate expression of life, as known to

actual experience. Even in the recent reaction toward romanticism, an important use is made of the realistic principle. The broad extent of the country and the variety of scenery and of type characters have given special prominence in American fiction to the story of local color and dialect. Indeed, in current fiction American life in all its phases is being described with the minute faithfulness of history. The leading representatives of realism are William Dean Howells and Henry James. About these two writers has gathered a group of apt pupils and imitators, who with their two masters constitute what is known as the school of American realism.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

1837–

Martin's Ferry, Ohio, was not a promising place for the making of an author, when William Dean Howells was born there in 1837. His father's newspaper office and a good-sized case of books in the home were the main instruments of his education. He learned the printer's trade, and from his wages of four dollars a week contributed to the support of the family.

Apprenticeship to Letters

"The printing office was my school from a very early date," he says. He obtained work upon the newspapers at the state capital, reaching at twenty-two the position of "news editor," and about the same time he published,

with his companion, John James Piatt, a volume of poems, entitled "Poems of Two Friends." His struggling aspirations and unfavorable environment during these early years are faithfully described in "Impressions and Experiences" and "A Boy's Town."

In 1860 he wrote a campaign biography of Lincoln, and for this service received the consulship at Venice. This transplanting from Ohio to ancient Venice was a fortunate event in his life, of which he made good use. It gave him, he says, "four years of almost uninterrupted study and literary work." The sketches in "Venetian Life" and "Italian Journeys," written at this time, are among the most delightful and valuable of their kind, showing in their minute observation and careful style the characteristic marks of his later manner. Upon his return he engaged for a time in New York journalism, but in 1866 he was made assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and in 1872 became editor-in-chief, which position he resigned at the end of nine years, to devote himself henceforth to independent authorship.

William Dean Howells

Venice

"Suburban Sketches," published in 1871, describes

with charming humor and grace of style life as he saw it about his home in Cambridge. In the same year appeared "Their Wedding Journey," a kind of prolonged sketch, revealing in a surprising manner the literary possibilities of a commonplace wedding trip across the state of New York. This was followed in 1873 by "A Chance Acquaintance," in which the narrative of events is shaped into a simple story. These books mark successive steps of approach toward the complete realistic novel, as finally constructed by Howells. They contain his finest literary qualities, and to some minds are more satisfactory representations of his genius than his full-formed novels, written according to certain principles that completely control his later work.

Early Works

As these principles constitute a kind of creed, strenuously preached and assiduously practiced by Howells throughout nearly the whole of his literary career, it is necessary to an understanding of his work and its influence to examine his theories, as presented especially in "Criticism and Fiction." A text from Emerson embodies his whole theme: "I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic. I embrace the common; I sit at the feet of the familiar and the low." The material of the novel must be plain, average, everyday humanity, and "realism is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material." Nothing must enter into fiction except "the simple, the natural, and the

Theory of Fiction

honest." He renounces romance and heroism, and regards any hankering after these old flesh-pots of delight as an evidence of the "petrifaction of taste" or of a "puerilized fancy." Scott to him is intolerable. Of all the great English masters, only Jane Austen is "artistic," for she was "the first and the last of the English novelists to treat material with entire truthfulness." The love of the passionate and heroic is a "crude and unwholesome thing." As to plot and action, these are not necessary to a story; neither is a hero or a heroine Any continuous and circumstantial description of a character or group of people is a story. The business of the novelist is to observe and record what he sees; the process is not so much photographic as microscopic, for the camera leaves some things in shadow, and the realist theoretically must disclose everything.

That Howells is superior to this restricted literary creed is pretty thoroughly attested by his wide popularity. His argument and example have served as a wholesome protest against the excesses of romance and sentimentality, and the lesson of moderation and good sense taught by his style is of incalculable value to pure fiction. But like every reaction, realism com mits its own indefensible excesses. His judgments upon his distinguished predecessors are often antipathetic rather than critical. Instead of being as broad as the shining light of truth, his realism is often as limited as the light of a table lamp. Because the im-

petuous romanticism of Scott and his school leaves upon the delicately sensitized taste of Howells merely the impression of caricature, and the ethical side-talks of Thackeray pall upon his mind, it does not necessarily argue a crude mind and an unlettered taste in others to find in these authors something consonant with their own views of fact and the eternal verities. To confine the novelist to the portrayal of men and women, "actuated by the motives and the passions in the measure we all know," is an arbitrary limitation. Life in the "measure we all know" is for the most part a commonplace, which art should mitigate, not emphasize. There are great things in life as well as little things, and the great things are no less natural and true because they are not common. The one great weakness of Howells's novels is their lack of high significance; the severest criticism upon them is that one is seldom impelled to read them a second time. The characters are never inspiring. The reader's vanity is flattered by discovering that the people of literature are just mediocre, unimpassioned people like himself. The appeal is from the commonplace to the commonplace. The inadequacy of this realism is especially felt in Howells's treatment of woman. The female characters in his novels are for the most part merely variations of a single type, the well-dressed, shallow, illogical woman, capable only of spasmodic goodness, conversational inanity, and delicate duplicity. But this injustice is

Limitations of Realism

an illustration of the common tendency of realism to represent only certain segments of the eternal round of human life, choosing those nearest the earth.

However, in spite of his "wrong-headedness," as Vedder remarks, "Howells is easily the first living American novelist." His hold upon popular interest, it is pretty certain, is due to qualities quite independent of his theories. His style alone is a literary triumph of a high order. He gives pleasure "by the mere process of writing," says Higginson, "just as when we are listening to conversation, a musical voice gratifies us almost more than wit or wisdom. Howells is without an equal in America — and therefore without an equal among his English-speaking contemporaries — as to some of the most attractive literary graces. He has no rival in half-tints, in modulation, in subtile phrases that touch the edge of an assertion and yet stop short of it. He is like a skater who executes a hundred graceful curves within the limits of a pool a few yards square." His expression takes the form of a peculiar simplicity, secured by a bold use of common words, selected, however, with an unerring sense of fitness, and by a happy use of familiar idioms and current slang. And he is a master of humor — refined, playful, half-concealed humor, emitted from the text like the odors from mellow fruit, a humor that is constantly and tantalizingly shading into irony. Humor, grace, and lucidity constitute the indisputable charm of his prose.

Howells's Style

His humor is most happily illustrated in his little comedies, such as "The Elevator," "The Mouse-Trap," "The Albany Depot," and "Unexpected Guests." These clever and graceful little dramas are the finest contribution of our literature to the amateur stage, light conversational trifles, just long enough to sustain a hearty laugh at the absurdities committed by a few ordinary people ingeniously brought together in extraordinary situations.

Comedies

Three fairly well-marked periods may be distinguished in the progress of Howells's fiction. To the first period belong, in addition to the two stories already mentioned, "The Lady of the Aroostook" and "The Undiscovered Country." The charm of these early books is increased by the lingering suggestions of romance and ideality, which the author had not fully rooted out of his nature. The second period is represented by "The Rise of Silas Lapham," a triumph of realism, and "A Modern Instance," his most powerful and most disagreeable book, the novel in which he says he has "always taken the most satisfaction. I have there come closest to American life as I know it." The latest phase of his fiction is represented by "A Hazard of New Fortunes," a novel of New York life, in which he shows an increasing inclination to attempt the unraveling of those perplexities of human relationship commonly generalized under the term

Development of his Fiction

"social problems." During this period his work reveals the strong influence of the great Russian realist, Tolstoi, whose novels, to his thinking, "transcend in truth, which is the highest beauty, all other works of fiction that have been written." To the ethical theories of Tolstoi he commits himself quite as unreservedly, recognizing "their truth with a rapture," and rendering them "my allegiance, heart and soul." This latest "literary passion," whatever may be the effect of its ethical content, cannot but be regarded as a misfortune to his art, in proportion as it leads him still farther away from his early manner.

Reading and Discussion. — Suburban Sketches; A Chance Acquaintance; The Lady of the Aroostook; The Rise of Silas Lapham; The Elevator; The Mouse-Trap.

Biography and Criticism. — Vedder's "Writers of To-day." Richardson's "American Literature." Higginson's "Short Studies of American Authors." Peck's "The Personal Equation." For a discussion of the realistic novel, see Howells's "Criticism and Fiction," Henry James's "The Art of Fiction" ("Partial Portraits"), and F. Marion Crawford's "The Novel: What It Is." *Autobiographic books:* "A Boy's Town"; "My Year in a Log Cabin, Impressions and Experiences"; "My Literary Passions."

HENRY JAMES

1843–1916

The true high priest of American realism in the common estimation is Henry James, who is the creator of the "international" type of novel, represented by such early books as "The American," "Daisy Mil-

ler," "The Europeans," and "An International Episode." In these stories the contrasts of character and manners between democratic America and aristocratic Europe are set forth with the full power of realism and with a cold disregard for the feelings of Americans. The appearance of "Daisy Miller," the typical, impulsive, unrestrained, dashing American girl abroad, created a sensational storm of protest. But it being the peculiar tenet of realism that the common and coarser side of truth is preferable for the realist's uses, James held to his purpose of depicting American crudeness on the background of European culture. The truth he chose to paint he painted with the skill of a consummate artist. For this he was especially fitted by education and experience.

The International Novel

Born in New York in 1843, with a literary inheritance, educated with great care in the principal cities of Europe, and residing abroad for a good part of his life, he became cosmopolitan in his culture and with an amplified consciousness of that fact. But in view of his imperfect knowledge of American life, and his disposition to patronize such "provincial" writers as Emerson and Hawthorne, his "cosmopolitanism," as Higginson suggests, "is, after all, limited: to be really cosmopolitan a man must be at home even in his own country." His brilliant intellectual equipment and rare advantages are shown in the firm, self-poised mastery of literary art, as he

Cosmopolitan Culture

chooses to cultivate it. In his essays and "Life of Hawthorne" he proves himself a critic of a superior order. In his first volume of stories, "The Passionate Pilgrim," 1875, as in the first books of Howells, there are evidences of freedom, touches of romance and sentiment, showing that the realistic principle had not yet been fully defined in his mind. But he soon formulated his creed, henceforth to be sustained with a peculiarly rigid directness.

Realism is carried by James to the perfection of a special science. Having selected a group of characters, he sits beside them with pencil and notebook in hand, watching and reporting with scientific accuracy every word and movement, without passion or sympathy, indifferent as to moral implication, aiming only to produce a full and faithful transcript of the surface expression of character. "His conceptions are not forged in the heat of his mind, but hammered from cold steel." He forms no plot, produces no action or progress, ends the scene where it began, draws no conclusion; he merely presents facts and reproduces endless conversations, often brilliant with wit and humor, and always convincingly real. Unlike the ordinary type characters of Howells, his characters are generally interesting for their individual significance and personal distinction. His stories are often studies, problems in psychology and conduct, approached from the side of taste rather than of morals or philosophy. He is often, like some of his

James's Realism

characters, "engaged in making studies for matrimony," but with only a scientific interest in the affair. The perfection of his skill is found in his short stories; in this form of fiction he holds a unique mastery. His art is too exquisite for wide popularity, almost "caviare to the general"; its finish is faultily faultless. One almost wishes that the style would lapse into a barbarism occasionally to break the monotony of excellence. "It is the style of the most finished urbanity, of the broadest and most generous culture." Says Howells: "In literature, one may say, without fear of contradiction, that the writer of the most distinction now writing English is Mr. Henry James."[1]

Reading and Discussion. — **The Madonna of the Future; Madame de Mauves; Daisy Miller; The Princess Cassamassima; The Soft Side; Portraits of Places.**

FRANCIS MARION CRAWFORD

1854–1909

One of our most popular and prolific writers of fiction is F. Marion Crawford, whom the English critic, Andrew Lang, regards as "the most versatile and various of modern novelists." Crawford enjoys the advantages of an international experience quite as opulent as that of Henry James, and, somewhat like James also, is perhaps better acquainted with almost

[1] W. D. Howells, in the *North American Review*, April, 1901.

every other people than with his own. The sweep and voluminousness of knowledge that is available to him for fiction are extraordinary, ranging from Indian occultism, Zoroaster, and the court of King Darius, to English rural life, American party politics and New York society, life in the Black Forest of Germany, ancient Rome and modern Italy, and the sacred penetralia of St. Peter's throne. Since the publication of his first novel, "Mr. Isaacs," in 1882, more than thirty volumes have appeared, the best upon Italian themes, the poorest upon American.

Extensive Equipment

Son of the distinguished American sculptor, Thomas Crawford, he was born in Italy in 1854; he spent his early childhood in New York, studied at Harvard, at Cambridge University, England, at Carlsruhe and Heidelberg, and at Rome. He acquired a wide knowledge of languages and their respective literatures, including the Sanskrit. In 1879 he went to India, and for a time edited the *Indian Herald* at Allahabad, where he obtained the experience that led to his first romantic and singularly interesting story, "Mr. Isaacs." In 1884 he settled in a permanent home near Sorrento, Italy.

Like his compatriots, Howells and James, Crawford formulates his own recipe for a "perfect novel," which, as illustrated in his own practice, is a compromise between the romantic and the realistic method. A novel is "an intellectual artistic luxury," to begin with.

"It must deal chiefly with love, for in that passion all men and women are most generally interested."

A Compromise Theory of the Novel

It "must be clean and sweet, for it must tell its tale to all mankind." Its realism "must be real, of three dimensions, not flat and photographic; its romance must be of the human heart and truly human, that is, of the earth as we have found it; its idealism must be transcendent, not measured to man's mind, but proportioned to man's soul."

This rational view of the novel is consistently exemplified in Crawford's work. Sometimes he dares the scorn of the realists, as in the delightful "Roman Singer," with a romance of the old-fashioned type, with the lonely castle, secret passages, midnight escape, and other paraphernalia of wonderment. The best example of his theory, as well as the finest product of his genius, is seen in the trilogy, "Saracinesca," "Sant' Ilario," and "Don Orsino," in which the history of a noble Italian family is depicted with the finest effects of both romance and realism.

Reading and Discussion. — Saracinesca; A Roman Singer.

TWO MASTERS OF THE SHORT STORY

One comes upon an embarrassment of riches among contemporary short-story writers that makes discrimination exceedingly difficult. Comparison becomes odious where so many are excellent. Some,

however, whose works have outlived their sensational success and settled into permanent fame, deserve special laurels. An entirely original vein of humorous and romantic, or fantastic, creation belongs to Francis Richard Stockton. He was born in Philadelphia in 1834, served an apprenticeship in New York journalism, was assistant editor of *St. Nicholas* in its early years, and finally withdrew from the turmoil of the city to a pleasant country home, there to devote himself entirely to literature. His reputation was established in 1879 with "Rudder Grange," and the quaintly humorous "Euphemia" and "Pomona" became at once universal favorites. His most celebrated fantasy is "The Lady or the Tiger?" in which the artful betrayal of the reader's confidence is a bit of humorous sagacity, exhibiting pure genius. His "special talent is for writing a tale which in a few pages and with the lightest of touches explicates an odd plot or delineates an odd character, dealing so gravely and logically with an absurd or impossible set of circumstances that they seem reality itself." His humor is sly, delicate, and pervasive, and his creations are always refined and wholesome; the reader is never ashamed of being found in the company of his characters. His style is mere simplicity, but that kind of artistic simplicity that defies imitation. He suggests DeFoe in his habitual method, but a distinct and unmistakable individuality marks all his work.

Francis Richard Stockton, 1834–1902

A more veritable disciple of DeFoe is the author of that famous tale "A Man Without a Country," Edward Everett Hale, whose "appallingly voluminous" writings extend to more than fifty volumes. He was born in Boston in 1822, was graduated from Harvard, and for more than half a century was one of the leading preachers of his native city. His "Ten Times One is Ten" led to the philanthropic movement among young people, carried on by the "Harry Wadsworth," "Lend a Hand," and other clubs, which now extends around the globe. He is a popular writer of history and biography, but his permanent literary fame rests upon his short stories, to which he imparts that peculiar quality of verisimilitude that imposes upon the minds of readers the most whimsical relation of invented facts as actuality. No other American writer has equaled him in this ability to make history out of fiction. "A Man Without a Country" has been quoted the world over as a record of facts. Like Stockton, Dr. Hale is not able to sustain his best qualities in a long story or complete novel. Their airy structures are not broad enough in the foundation of sentiment or character; the puzzle or the mystery must be solved before the interest flags. "In His Name," a story of the Waldenses, has been widely read on account of its historic interest. Next to Dr. Hale's abounding humor, one most enjoys his healthy optimism. The spirit of all his work is expressed in the motto of his young hero,

Edward Everett Hale, 1822-1909

"Look up and not down; look forward and not back; look out and not in; and lend a hand."

Reading and Discussion. — Stockton's "Rudder Grange"; "The Lady or the Tiger?"; "The Remarkable Wreck of the Thomas Hyde." Hale's "A Man Without a Country"; "My Double and How He Undid Me"; "The Brick Moon"; "Ten Times One is Ten."

A GROUP OF NEW ENGLAND WOMEN

Howells generously remarks, apropos of the short story, that "the sketches and studies by the women seem faithfuller and more realistic than those of the men, in proportion to their number." The present activity of women in literature is one of the most prominent facts of the age; indeed it marks a historic epoch in the progress of civilization. In imaginative literature women in America are probably at the present time producing more work than men, and of an average quality, possibly, quite as high in the scale of literary merit. It is natural that in intellectual New England the widest development of feminine genius should have appeared. The common life and scenery of New England, the home, childhood, the joys and sorrows of simple human hearts, have been described by these women with remarkable fullness and truth, with realistic force and idealistic purpose, and with a pure regard for the relations of the virtues of literature to the virtues of everyday life. The names of Mrs. Stowe, Miss Alcott,

Women in Literature

Lucy Larcom, Mrs. Dorr, Mrs. Whitney, Celia Thaxter, and many others have long been household words.

Few descriptions of nature are more genuine and delightful than Celia Thaxter's "The Isles of Shoals."

Celia Thaxter, 1836–1894

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps-Ward also has given us sympathetic studies of the sea that beats out its wild music for poets' ears along the rocky "north shore." She knew the people in the factory towns, and at times her pen was devoted philanthropically to "causes." But she knew best and described best the heart and soul of the New England woman, in her strongest moods and aspirations, as one sees in "The Story of Avis" and other books in which the men are generally foils for the women. She was impulsive, passionate, and intense in her emotions, and her imagination was sometimes venturesome, as in "The Gates Ajar," which was a shock to the orthodox, a comfort to many afflicted hearts, and a sensational literary success. Sweet, tender, and graceful are the songs of Julia C. R. Dorr, in "Friar Anselmo," "Afternoon Songs," and other volumes, to which are to be added several novels and books of delightful travel sketches, such as "The Flower of England's Face." With these authors is associated the novelist, Sarah Orne Jewett, who with painstaking fidelity and in beautiful prose suffused with quiet humor paints the life of the good old-fashioned folk of her native section. We could not well

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, 1844–1911

Julia C. R. Dorr, 1825–1913

Sarah Orne Jewett, 1849–1909

spare such books as "Deephaven," "A Marsh Island," and "The Country of the Pointed Firs." Her books are alive with the fragrance of the woods, the murmur of pines, the lilt of the ebbing tide in the lush sea grass, and the simple occupations of homely country folk. With this author one gets very near to the simple heart of nature and of natural people. Rose Terry Cooke achieved a notable success with her short stories, presenting vividly the grimly humorous aspects of New England character, as in "Miss Lucinda" and "The Deacon's Week." A strong contrast to these bucolic writers is found in the work of Harriet Prescott Spofford, whose "Amber Gods," "Midsummer and May," and other short stories display a luxuriant and romantic imagination "fairly resplendent in color, rich in tone, and Oriental in perfume." One of the strongest writers of this group is Margaret Deland, who in "John Ward, Preacher" and "Sydney" grapples boldly with profound problems without disturbing the balance of fine literary values.

Rose Terry Cooke, 1827–1892

Harriet Prescott Spofford, 1835–

Margaret Deland, 1857–

Of present New England novelists the most famous, and probably the most certain of permanent fame, is Mary Eleanor Wilkins who, in the judgment of many critics, deserves to be placed among the greatest novelists of the period. She describes with a powerful, almost painful realism, local types and scenery, lean-faced farmers, gaunt and colorless old maids, gossiping housewives, Puritan

Mary Eleanor Wilkins (Mrs. Freeman), 1862-

consciences, primitive passions that stir the souls of homely people the limit of whose world is the village post-office. "A Humble Romance and Other Stories," 1887, "A New England Nun," and "Pembroke," represent her characteristic power and method. "Giles Corey, Yeoman," was a dramatic experiment of striking force, and some of her more recent work, as "The Heart's Highway," shows an inclination to recede somewhat from her rigid realism, in the direction of romanticism.

The Lesser Novelists

From the scores of novelists who have won an undisputed success, it is difficult to select with any hope of justice the few who can be named in a subordinate paragraph. The humor and pathos of New England life are strongly depicted by John Townsend Trowbridge (1827–1916), in "Neighbor Jackwood," "Coupon Bonds," and many other stories, and in his quaint poems of the soil, like the "Vagabonds." The breezy out-of-door novel "John Brent" will keep the name of Theodore Winthrop (1828–1861) green, and perhaps commend his other stories. With Winthrop perished, in the Civil War, the brilliant Irish-American Fitz-James O'Brien (1828–1861), whose "Diamond Lens" and other short tales do not suffer in comparison with the tales of Poe. Another forgotten New York novelist is Herman Melville (1819–1891), whose "Typee" and "Omoo," containing his adventures while a captive among the cannibals of the South Sea Islands, were once the sensation of two continents. Two powerful and artistic novels by Arthur Sherburn Hardy (1847–), "But Yet a Woman" and "Passe Rose," raised high hopes that may yet be fulfilled. The many novels of Julian Hawthorne (1846–), some of them remarkable for creative force, like "Archibald Malmaison," show the inheritance of a literary gift from his distinguished father, from which achieve-

ments of permanent worth might reasonably be expected. Hjalmar Hjörth Boyesen (1848–1895), an adopted Norwegian, gathered the memories of his native land into the stories "Gunnar," "A Norseman's Pilgrimage," and "Ilka on the Hill-top," which were written with a free, spontaneous love and romantic fancy that disappear in his later novels, when he had become converted to the realism of Howells and Tolstoi. Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849–) will be affectionately remembered by "That Lass o' Lowrie's" and "Little Lord Fauntleroy," notwithstanding her later descent to the methods of the naturalistic school of fiction and the sensational stage in her "Lady of Quality."

Romantic Reaction

A welcome reaction against realism and naturalism seems to be marked by the enormous popularity of recent historical romances, such as Lew Wallace's "Ben Hur," Mary H. Catherwood's "The Romance of Dollard," Edwin Lassetter Bynner's "The Begum's Daughter," Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's "Hugh Wynne," Mary Johnston's "To Have and To Hold," Paul Leicester Ford's "Janice Meredith," Winston Churchill's "Richard Carvel," and Maurice Thompson's "Alice of Old Vincennes." This return to romanticism shows that the great reading public loves a story, a genuine hero and heroine, and a plot well filled with incident and adventure. One characteristic of this historical fiction reveals the influence of the realistic movement, as well as the scientific method in recent historical writing. The story is outlined upon a background of real history, constructed by the novelist with a painstaking regard for accuracy of detail. In fact, the tendency is toward the union of the romantic and realistic methods for the production of a new type of fiction combining the merits of both methods; and in spite of those critics who, like Brander Matthews, harbor a kind of academic prejudice against "that bastard hybrid of fact and fancy which is known as the historical romance,"[1] criticism is reconciling its judgment to the instinctive preferences of the great reading public.

[1] *The Study of Fiction*, by Brander Matthews, in "Counsel upon the Reading of Books," p. 173.

THE WEST IN LITERATURE

The marvelous growth of the West, so rapid and so extensive that history cannot keep pace with it, is the most conspicuous feature of our national development since the war of the Revolution. Nothing in the century of our national life, not even the Civil War, rivals in interest and significance this wonderful sweep of our civilization over the illimitable spaces of the West. As the new political power of this great region already threatens to deprive the East of its supremacy in civil affairs, so it is not unlikely that a literature will be developed of corresponding magnitude and strength. The West is now the most truly democratic section of our country, and so far as American literature expresses American democracy it will almost necessarily be Western in its spirit and flavor, if not in form. There are already signs of local pride and enthusiasm, of free, self-confident expression, of high-wrought purpose as well as adventurous experiment, that promise a new and distinctive contribution to our national literary types. A loyal Western author, Hamlin Garland, indulges in prophecy that is significant, even if over-confident. "It is my sincere conviction," he says, "that the interior is to be henceforth the real America. From these interior spaces of the South and West the most vivid and fearless and original expression of the future American democracy

The Literature of Democracy

will come." The literature already springing up in this section "is to be a literature not of books, but of life. It will draw its inspiration from original contact with men and with nature."[1]

New as is the West — the vast agricultural West, with its wire fences and railroads and endless acres of wheat and corn — there is also an old West, the West of free wind-swept prairies, with the buffalo, the Indian, the gold-hunter, and the emigrant train. The strange and fascinating features of this aboriginal West afford a magnificent background for the poet and the novelist, and thus far comparatively little use has been made of this rich material. The first representative work in this field came from the mining camps of the "Argonauts of '49" in the poems and stories of Bret Harte.

FRANCIS BRET HARTE

1839–1902

Francis Bret Harte was born in Albany, in 1839, went to California in 1854, tried teaching and mining, making a failure of both, then learned printing, and finally exchanged the composing stick for the editor's pen. Among his first literary attempts were the "Condensed Novels," parodies of famous works of fiction, contributed to the *Californian*. In 1868 the *Overland Monthly* was started, with Harte as editor, and in the second number appeared "The Luck of Roaring

[1] Hamlin Garland's "Crumbling Idols," p. 156.

Camp," which was at once accepted as "heralding the rise of a new star in the literary heavens." This was soon followed by "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," generally regarded as his best story. About the same time he also wrote his best poems, "John Burns of Gettysburg," "Plain Language from Truthful James," "The Society upon the Stanislaus," and others. In 1878 he went abroad with the appointment of consul, first at Crefeld, Germany, and then at Glasgow, and in England he elected to make his home, where his popularity has continued more steadily than in his own country; for the wild life pictured in his stories seems to meet the Englishman's demand for something "original" in American literature.

First and Best Work

Bret Harte is master of a limited field. He can make vivid, dramatic sketches of the rough life of a mining region as no one else can. He can bring out with startling force the humor, pathos, and tragedy of his typical characters, leather-faced miners, swaggering speculators, gamblers, and degraded women, and with a broad charity he can find some redeeming quality of goodness or heroism in them all. But he cannot analyze or develop character, or manage a plot. His long stories, as "Gabriel Conroy," are but series of episodes. Moreover, his literary resources appear to be confined to this Californian experience. The early stories were masterpieces of their kind, unequaled by anything in his later work.

A Limited Genius

"His prose idyls of the camp and coast," says Stedman, "even more than his ballads, were the vouchers of a poet; familiar as the verse at once became, it is far less creative than the stories. The serious portion of it, excepting a few dialect pieces, — 'Jim,' 'In the Tunnel,' etc., — is much like the verse of Longfellow, Whittier, and Taylor; the humorous poems, though never wanting in some touch of nature, are apt to be what we do not recognize as American. But of either class it may be said that it is, like the rhyming of his master, Thackeray, the overflow of a rare genius, whose work must be counted among the treasures of the language."

His Poetry

Class Reading. — *Poetry:* John Burns of Gettysburg; Plain Language from Truthful James; In the Tunnel; Jim; Dickens in Camp; The Society upon the Stanislaus.

Prose: The Outcasts of Poker Flat; How Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar; A Ship of '49.

EDWARD EGGLESTON

1837–1902

The pioneer life of the middle West found its first literary representative in Edward Eggleston, who has painted in most vivid colors the picturesque character of the original Hoosier. Eggleston was born in Indiana, in 1837, spent some years as an itinerant Methodist preacher, edited Sunday-school journals in Chicago, came to New York in 1870, became editor of *Hearth and Home*, preached five years in Brooklyn, and

thenceforward devoted himself exclusively to literature. In 1871 he published "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," thus opening a new field of fiction as strange and interesting as that of Bret Harte. This was followed by "The Circuit Rider," "Roxy," "The Hoosier Schoolboy," "The Graysons," and "The Mystery of Metropolisville," all novels of the soil, fresh, vivid, and genuine, growing directly out of personal experience. "The scenes are rough," says Richardson, "and the characters 'tough,' in the better sense and sometimes in the worse; but the fidelity with which youth and age in the backwoods are painted makes the books, like so many other American works, at least valuable essays toward that full delineation of the whole country which our novelists seem surely, though irregularly, to be making."

Hoosier Novels

The breadth of Dr. Eggleston's powers has been shown in later years by a change of scene for his fiction. "The Faith Doctor," 1891, is a study of Christian Science with New York social life as a background. His final inclinations seemed to be toward historical work. The first two volumes, "The Beginners of a Nation" and "The Transit of Civilization," of his projected work, "A History of Life in the United States," have already appeared. To the completion of this large undertaking he had apparently pledged the strength of his remaining years.

Reading and Discussion. — The Hoosier Schoolmaster; The Graysons.

Out of the Ohio valley came Howells to New York, as well as Eggleston and the Cary sisters; and four poets are native there who have a strong hold upon the popular heart, Hay, Piatt, Riley, and Edith Thomas. John Hay (1838–1905) has never returned to the field of his first success in "Pike County Ballads," and the promise given in the delightful volume of Spanish sketches, "Castilian Days," has not been fulfilled. He was private secretary to Abraham Lincoln, and his massive "Abraham Lincoln; a History," written with John G. Nicolay, is likely to remain one of the great standard works upon the period. John James Piatt (1835–), the "Whittier of the West," in his "Poems of Sunshine and Firelight," and other volumes of sweet idyllic verse, has won the right to be called "the laureate of prairie and homestead life." James Whitcomb Riley (1852–1916) is "the Hoosier poet" of to-day, who pipes his country ditties in quaint and homely dialect with genuine humor and poetic spirit. "The Old Swimmin'-hole and 'Leven More Poems" appeared in 1883, followed by many other volumes that prove him to be at present our leading dialect poet. Edith Matilda Thomas (1854–), a poet of secure and increasing fame, has given us, in such volumes as "In Sunshine Land" and "A Winter Swallow, and Other Verse," daintily finished lyrics, sweet with the perfume of woods and fields. Children have reason to mourn the loss of Eugene Field (1850–1895), who won the hearts of "grown-ups" as well with his humorous, tender, dainty, and fantastic little songs. He will be long remembered if only for the sake of his "Little Boy Blue." In Michigan Will Carleton (1845–1912) wrote his "Farm Ballads" and "Farm Legends," before transferring his residence to the East. A poet of home and the domestic affections, he caught at once the popular ear with "Over the Hill to the Poor-house" and "The First Settler's Story," and he worked with wide success this vein of simple feeling and homely speech.

Some Western Poets

A picturesque representative of the remote West and its spirit as embodied in verse is Cincinnatus Heine Miller, known in literature as Joaquin Miller, a Rocky Mountain Byron, whose

"Songs of the Sierras," "Songs of the Sunlands," "Songs of the Desert," and other collections, excited a temporary enthusiasm, especially in England, that led to an extravagant estimate of his poetic merits. His volumes show an impetuous imagination, a bold originality and windy freshness, often a tropical richness of color, and an expression sometimes strongly effective in picturing the wild beauty of mountain and desert, but perversely disobedient to the fundamental rules of rhetoric. Indeed his limitations are due, not so much to the lack of creative power, as to an untutored taste and a disposition to be satisfied with bizarre and sensational effects. He is a child of nature, but of nature only in her vast and magnificent rudeness, as known to him in his early pioneer experience.

Joaquin Miller, 1841–1913

Fiction rather than poetry is yet the representative form of literature in the West. The mining districts of Montana and Idaho have a sympathetic interpreter in Mary Halleck Foote (1847–), whose characteristic work is represented by "The Led-horse Claim," "John Bodewin's Testimony," and "The Last Assembly Ball." The name of Mary Hartwell Catherwood (1847–1902) was placed high in the list of native novelists by the striking historical novel, "The Romance of Dollard." Alice French, whose pen name is "Octave Thanet," has drawn much literary interest to the canebrakes of Arkansas and the small towns of the middle West with her strong, dramatic short stories, represented by "Knitters in the Sun," "Otto the Knight," and "Stories of a Western Town." A novelist whose books deserve a second reading is Constance Fenimore Woolson (1838–1894), representing the lake region of the West in her "Castle Nowhere," and the South, in the early years of reconstruction, in the volume of tender and pathetic stories entitled "Rodman the Keeper." Her novel "Anne" was pronounced by the London *Spectator* to be "one of the best novels America has produced for the last quarter of a century." Army life on the Western frontier during the past twenty years is vividly presented in the stories of Captain Charles King (1844–). Hamlin Garland (1860–) pictures the hard,

prosaic, uninspiring features of the Western farmer's life; his best-known works are "Main Travelled Roads," "Prairie Folks," "Rose of Dutcher's Coolly," and "The Eagle's Heart." With a similar fidelity Stanley Waterloo paints, in "A Man and a Woman," the life of the upper Mississippi valley. The largest expectations, perhaps, have been raised by Henry Blake Fuller (1857–), who in "The Cliff-dwellers" and "With the Procession" has described, perhaps with unwarranted emphasis, certain phases of the social life of the Western metropolis.

AMERICAN HUMOR

It is generally admitted that America has produced an original type of humor, which, however difficult of definition, is unmistakable in its main characteristics. The shrewd, calculating, keen-witted Yankee, serenely confident and good-natured, as represented by "Brother Jonathan," has impressed his unique personality strongly upon our literature; but injustice has been done to our humorous genius, especially by foreign admirers, by exalting the more crude and vulgar manifestations of this character. The perverted spelling of "Josh Billings," the inimitable foolery of "Artemus Ward," and the perennial waggery of the "funny man" of the newspapers are not so truly representative of American humor as the refined literary products of "Hosea Biglow" and the "Autocrat." Indeed, an improving taste is demonstrating that humorous expression does not need to be rude, boisterous, and vulgar in order to be American. Our finest humor to-day is found in the work of

Two Types of Humor

such writers as Stockton, Howells, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Mary Wilkins, and Robert Grant, where it appears as a delicate and graceful literary quality — a flavor rather than an independent substance — that vitalizes its subject with permanent interest. The saving grace of much of our contemporary fiction is this quality of piquant and pervasive humor.

American humor can better be described than defined Its basis is a strong, native common sense. Underneath its drollery there is generally some hard fact of experience or wise criticism of life. It is fresh, spontaneous, and wholesome, with no bitterness in its jests or poisonous sting. It possesses an extraordinary aptitude for the incongruous, and makes a peculiarly effective use of contradiction and anti-climax; as in Artemus Ward's advice, "Always live within your income, if you have to borrow money to do it," or in the homely maxims of Josh Billings, as "It is better to kno less than to kno so mutch that ain't so." It is often flippant and irreverent, treating with equal liberty things sacred and profane, exhibiting a perverse delight in discovering the comic side of serious things, and making an audacious use of scriptural thought and phraseology. Finally, its most salient characteristic is extravagant and whimsical exaggeration. Its favorite figure is hyperbole, as in Lowell's description of the negro who was "so black that

Characteristics of American Humor

charcoal made a chalk mark upon him." A sweep of exaggeration as broad as a prairie is combined with the utmost gravity of statement; the most inherently absurd proposition is presented with the most soberfaced seriousness. Much of the preposterous American boasting is merely humor of this kind.

In studying humorous literature, especially American, it is important to keep in mind the fundamental distinction between wit and humor. This distinction Lowell has not only amply illustrated in his writings, but has also lucidly defined: "We find it very natural to speak of the breadth of humor, while wit is by the necessity of its being as narrow as a flash of lightning, and as sudden. Humor may pervade a whole page without our being able to put our finger on any passage and say, 'It is here.' Wit must sparkle and snap in every line or it is nothing. . . . Wit demands only a clear and nimble intellect, presence of mind, and a happy faculty of expression. This perfection of phrase, this neatness, is an essential of wit, because its effect must be instantaneous; whereas humor is often diffuse and roundabout, and its impression cumulative like the poison of arsenic."

Wit and Humor Defined

The original Yankee of humorous literature, the progenitor of "Hosea Biglow," was "Major Jack Downing," created by Seba Smith in the "Downing Letters" of about 1830. From "jest about the middle

of down East" this hero, like Lowell's hero, sent his impressions of public events to a local newspaper, the *Portland Courier*. From these papers Charles Farrar Browne, "Artemus Ward," probably caught his first comic inspiration. Moreover, while working in a Boston printing office Browne set the type for Saxe's witty verses and Shillaber's "Mrs. Partington." But the popular "lecture bureau" of the period furnished him with the most prolific hint. Devising a "panorama," consisting of grotesquely poor pictures, and constructing an irrelevant and incoherent discourse to accompany it, he poked fun at the eminent lecturers by becoming an eminent lecturer himself. His "show" became immensely popular at home and abroad. An English author who heard him still regards his "showman" as "one of the most realistic and irresistibly captivating creations of modern fiction." His originality was quite unique. To his mind the world appeared upside down; the grotesque or absurd side of everything was to him the natural side. Nothing was too serious to be comic, nothing too simple to be converted to the purposes of wit. The point of his jest is usually in a sudden twist given to the commonplace that upsets it and reveals some unexpected fact or phase, as in his remark that "an occasional joke improves a comic paper." In his satire he was generally wise and just, ridiculing only things that deserve ridicule. His best witticisms that are still current may be found in "Ar-

Charles Farrar Browne, 1834–1867

temus Ward: His Book," "Artemus Ward in London," and "Artemus Ward: His Panorama." Much of the peculiar flavor of his humor, arising largely from an extraordinary, laughter-provoking simplicity of personal manner, has evaporated from the printed page, and his fame, like that of the actor, is becoming a memory of the oldest play-goers.

Out of the aboriginal West came our most celebrated humorist, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, known throughout the circuit of the globe as "Mark Twain." He was born in Missouri, and his early years were spent in the "loafing, out-at-elbows, down-at-the-heels, slave-holding" town of Hannibal. It was a crude, elemental life, unpropitious enough for the development of literary tastes. At thirteen he began his career by learning the printer's trade. His earliest ambition as a boy was to be a steamboat man, and the roving printer became for five years a Mississippi river pilot. An adventurous trip to Nevada furnished the material for "Roughing It," one of our best books of wild West-

Mark Twain

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 1835-1910

ern experience. He tried mining without success, then tried journalism for a time, and in San Francisco tried a lecture, the announcement of which ended: "Doors open at 7½. The trouble will begin at 8." It was a success, and was soon repeated in New York, a success that was destined to be repeated in "lecture tours" in all parts of the world.

In 1867 appeared his first volume of humorous sketches, entitled "The Celebrated Jumping Frog." The same year he visited the Old World, and two years later published "The Innocents Abroad," which speedily brought him both fame and fortune. A half million copies of this book have been sold. This was followed by a long list of books, many of which have reached a similarly phenomenal popularity, being republished wherever the English language is understood, and translated into the leading languages of Europe. The narrative of a second trip to Europe is contained in "A Tramp Abroad." "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn," supposedly autobiographic, are astonishingly clever studies of the American bad boy. His best autobiographic narrative is "Life on the Mississippi." Indeed, to this majestic river he owed his finest inspiration; wherever it flows through his work, there is a breadth and eloquence of expression that could come only from native affection. The Mississippi belongs to Mark Twain as the Hudson belongs to Irving. "The Prince and the Pauper" and "A Connecticut Yankee in

Principal Works

King Arthur's Court," are English stories with carefully studied historical backgrounds. In the latter, in the spirit of Don Quixote, he indulges in a rollicking tilt against the rose-colored chivalry of the "Morte d'Arthur" and the "Idylls of the King." "Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc," in which the story of the miraculous maid is told soberly, almost reverently, was published anonymously, as if to test his claim to the rights of serious authorship.

He long enjoyed the distinction of being universally regarded as the "first of living humorists," an eminence due in large measure to his extensive popularity as a public jester. But he was more than "the privileged comedian of the republic," more than a professional fun-maker for the millions. He possessed a true literary gift, and exercised a trained literary skill. "No American author to-day," says Brander Matthews, "has at his command a style more nervous, more varied, more flexible, or more direct than Mark Twain." He sees things with remarkable clearness, and describes them with clean-cut, effective expression. The accurate and comprehensive pictures of the crude society in which he was born are invaluable merely for the history they record. His ingenious fancy seems to be inexhaustible in its creative resources, producing with natural ease the most astonishing extravagances, elaborately finished with photographic minuteness of detail. Beneath his picturesque exaggeration there is generally a foundation of good

Literary Qualities

sense; one recognizes a certain unexpected sanity and justice in his judgments. He is an interpreter of life and men, not like Holmes, through culture, but through experience. He has the spirit, without the self-consciousness of the reformer. He hates sham and cant, and against both makes a legitimate use of satire. His humor is not copied from others or cultivated from books. The emphatic Yankee element in his nature, the kinship with Franklin and Lincoln, is the source of his power. "He seldom flashes like Artemus," says Haweis; "he distils his fun drop by drop through a whole page, instead of condensing it into a sentence." One characteristic seriously mars his work. A vein of coarseness too frequently crops out, which is not justified even by the elemental rudeness of the material with which he deals. His elaborately contrived jests sometimes approach vulgarity. It is, however, a difficult matter for a humorist to preserve the nice balance of taste required to discriminate between cleverness and coarseness.

Class Reading. — The Innocents Abroad; Life on the Mississippi; The £1,000,000 Bank Note; The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg; My First Lie and How I Got Out of It; Private History of the "Jumping Frog" Story; The Stolen White Elephant; Speech on the Weather.

THE ESSAY-NATURALISTS

The great intellectual interests of the present age are scientific. The broad scientific movement of the

last fifty years, which might be succinctly defined as an effort to obtain a more accurate knowledge of the underlying truth of things, has profoundly affected every department of art and life. On the physical side human life may almost be said to have been transformed, and in respect to the ideals of art and religion the revolution is hardly less complete. The leaders of human effort to-day are not the truth-makers, prophets, and seers, but the truth-seekers, the patient devotees of fact, who give themselves to the work of interpreting the phenomena of nature and determining the laws governing her processes. To the idea of God manifest in the soul of man has been added the idea of God manifest in the soul of nature. The prophets of these latter days have been Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer, and our own Gray, Dana, and Agassiz. There could not but be losses attendant upon such a reactionary movement as the age is witnessing, but there are greater gains in the new and varied interests that have been awakened, and in the broader and deeper significance given to life itself.

Scientific Movement of the Age

Out of the scientific interest has grown a new form of literature, the particular mission of which is to correlate more closely human life with the life of the outward world. The impulse was first felt by the poets. Ever since the outflow of Burns's sympathy to the field mouse, —

A New Literary Motive

> Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,

and the expression of Wordsworth's peculiar creed that so startled the orthodox, —

> And 'tis my faith that every flower
> Enjoys the air it breathes,

the tendency of poetry has been toward the humanizing of nature, the establishing of a genuine human relationship with all living things in the out-of-door world through intimate knowledge and tender sympathy. Drawing its inspiration from both poets and scientists, a school of prose writers has arisen that is exerting a rapidly increasing influence by adding to the realm of culture the infinitely varied sources of enjoyment in woods and fields. The school is represented in England by Richard Jefferies, author of the "Gamekeeper at Home," and in our own country by John Burroughs. In the library these writers are essayists, and in the open air they are naturalists. Let us call them, therefore, essay-naturalists.

The Literary Scientist

The essay-naturalist's view-point or approach to nature is that of the poet and artist rather than that of the scientist. Science is impersonal; it observes, classifies, and records facts for truth's sake alone. Literature is personal; it observes and records, but records facts as colored by individual feeling and thought. The distinction is well described by Burroughs. Deprecating the methods of the "calculating nature-students" who work with microscope and gather only "specimens" for a collec-

tion, he describes his own method: "I have loved nature and spent many of my days in the fields and woods in as close intimacy with her varied forms of life as I could bring about, but a student of nature in any strict scientific sense I have not been. What knowledge I possess of her creatures and ways has come to me through contemplation and enjoyment, rather than through deliberate study of her. I have been occupied more with the spirit than with the letter of her works. In our time, it seems to me, too much stress is laid upon the letter." This is the kind of knowledge, he says, "that reaches and affects the character and becomes a grown part of us. We absorb this as we absorb the air, and it gets into the blood."

These students are not less curious and enthusiastic than the scientists about the facts of the physical world, and are often quite as patient and painstaking observers; but the impetus comes to their work from the heart rather than from the head. The realization of a kinship with all living things is a new source of inspiration. It was a true thought of Robert Louis Stevenson's that "to live close to nature is to keep your soul alive." Such living is growth and progress in all the virtues. Through beauty and sympathy nature appeals to man as man appeals to his fellows. The new relationship is well expressed by one of the younger poets, Bliss Carman: —

> Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
> I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,

A host in the sunshine, a snowdrift in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

JOHN BURROUGHS

1837–

The founder of the school of essay-naturalists was Thoreau, whose "Walden" was to America what Gilbert White's "Natural History of Selborne" was to England, a revelation and a prophecy concerning a new kingdom on earth. We must not forget the earlier pioneer work of the ornithologists, Wilson and Audubon, whose personal records of adventure in birdland possess the interest almost of romance. It was Thoreau, however, who first brought scholarship into touch with wild life, through the medium of a minute and affectionate personal interest. Once having read his books, the public could never relapse wholly into its former indifference toward nature, and thus the way was prepared for his successors. The most distinguished disciple of Thoreau is John Burroughs, who for more than thirty years through his fresh-hearted essays has been exercising the charms of a fascinating companionship in the fields.

Education of a Naturalist

John Burroughs was born on a farm in Roxbury, N. Y. He had only the ordinary opportunities for education afforded by a farming community, but he had more than the ordinary desire for education. To obtain books he tapped the

maple trees and sold the sugar in the earliest markets. The best part of his education, however, as he himself regards it, was obtained from the intimate association of his boyhood with the life of the out-of-door world. "I was born," he says, "of and among people who neither read books nor cared for them." And to this "unliterary environment," he says is due, "probably what little freshness and primal sweetness my books contain." "No one," he adds, "starts in the study of natural history with such advantages as he whose youth was passed on the farm. He has already got a great deal of it in his blood and bones; he has grown up in right relations with man and beast; the study comes easy and natural to him."

For about nine years Burroughs was a school-teacher, and for another nine years he held a position in the Treasury Department at Washington, and then he was appointed by the government as a bank-examiner. In 1874 he resumed his original profession of farming upon a few choice acres in Esopus on the Hudson. Here is his home, "Riverby," beautifully characteristic in all its details of the man and his tastes, where he divides his time between literature and fruit culture. A mile from the house, by a foot-path over the hills, is "Slabsides," his favorite retreat in the woods. Here he reads and writes and exchanges confidences with the neighborly squirrels and birds, maintaining a sort of domestic relationship with all living things about him. He loves nature's solitudes, yet he does

not, hermit-like, renounce society. He visits the city occasionally, and now and then gives a lecture. But "three or four days in the city," he says, "is about all I can stand at a time."

The felicitous titles chosen by Burroughs for his books are always pleasantly suggestive of their contents. Such titles as "Wake-Robin," "Winter Sunshine," "Locusts and Wild Honey," "Fresh Fields," and "Squirrels and Other Fur Bearers" are rich promises of open-air delights. He writes only when moved by inclination, never "to order," and therefore the quality is always his best. His style is simple and natural, colloquial in its directness, showing the desire merely to report in a straightforward, honest manner what he has seen and felt. With the peculiar earnestness of his loving interest in an object, he assumes the sympathetic interest of his reader and makes him his companion and confidant. "What I feel I can express," he says, "and only what I feel. If I had run after the birds only to write about them, I never should have written anything that any one would care to read. I must write from sympathy and love, or not at all." Elsewhere he gives this neat bit of advice: "You must have the bird in your heart before you can find it in the bush."

The Secret of his Style

With this directness and simplicity, that seem to be concerned merely with the plain record of facts, there is always a distinct literary flavor. Burroughs is a man of books, as well as a man of the woods. The

volume "Indoor Studies," containing his essays in literary criticism, proves that his judgment in a matter of literary values may be quite as significant as in the matter of a high-hole's method of nest-building. Among the first books purchased by Burroughs was a set of Dr. Johnson's essays, and after the ponderous sentences of the "Rambler" he attempted to model his style. Then Emerson's works came into his experience, giving a new direction to both thought and style. And then came Whitman, whose "great humanizing power" he regards as the strongest influence exercised upon him through books. To Matthew Arnold he gives credit for having taught him to think clearly and write clearly. With all the great masters of modern literature he is familiar, but to original, elemental personalities, like Emerson, Carlyle, and Whitman, he is especially drawn, because in these he finds the same directness and sincerity that he finds in nature. The rough, bold, unacademic expression of such writers is to him like the language of winds, and waterfalls, and the untaught birds. But this preference does not prevent him from appreciating the more gracious and artistic influences of literature. Everywhere in his writing are touches of artistic beauty, descriptions of idyllic grace, facts of observation illuminated by fanciful suggestion and finely chosen literary allusion, and strokes of imaginative coloring that clearly indicate the kinship of his genius with that of the true poets.

Literary Growth

Burroughs is naturally compared with Thoreau, whom at many points he resembles, and to whom at many more points he is superior. Their comparative qualities Mabie thus summarizes: "Burroughs, like Thoreau, is strictly indigenous; he could not have grown in any other soil. Our literature betrays, in almost every notable work, the presence of foreign influences; but Thoreau and Burroughs have been fed by the soil, and have reproduced in flower and fruit something of its distinctive quality. Of the two Thoreau had the more thorough formal education; but Burroughs shows keener susceptibility to formative influences of all kinds. Thoreau had the harder mind, the nature of greater resisting power; Burroughs is more sensitive to the atmosphere of his time, to the proximity of his fellows, and to the charms of art. Thoreau would have devoted more time to a woodchuck than to Carlyle, Arnold, or Whitman; Burroughs emphasized his indebtedness to Wordsworth, Arnold, Emerson, and Whitman. He has the more open mind, the quicker sympathies, the wider range. If he sometimes strikes us as less incisive and original than Thoreau, he is not less distinctly American, and there is a riper and saner quality in him. In Thoreau one is constantly aware of the element of wild life which still survives on this new continent. In Burroughs one feels the domesticity of nature; one is aware at all times of the simple, natural background of American life."

Burroughs and Thoreau

Class Study. — Sharp Eyes; An Idyl of the Honey Bee; A Bunch of Herbs; Winter Neighbors; The Apple; A Taste of Maine Birch.

Class Reading. — A Sharp Lookout; April; Pepacton: a Summer Voyage; Winter Pictures; The Pastoral Bees; Birds' Nesting; The Return of the Birds.

Associated with Burroughs in the beneficent work of extending the new friendship for nature, and resembling him in the method of work, are several writers whose numerous books already form a goodly library of natural history. Ernest Ingersoll clearly indicates the attitude he holds toward the nature-folk about him, and the spirit with which he writes of them, by the titles he chooses for his books, as "Wild Neighbors," "Country Cousins," and "Friends Worth Knowing." With a style of convincing sincerity Bradford Torrey writes of his experiences with "Birds in the Bush," and of the beauty and wonder that most people never see along "The Footpath Way," and with the buoyant heartiness of the season reports the "Spring Notes from Tennessee." Every one who once catches the woodsy odors of Frank Bolles's books profoundly regrets that the author could not have lived to write many more essays like "From Blomidon to Smoky" and "Land of the Lingering Snow." One of the most popular writers of this group is Olive Thorne Miller, who describes in an easy and familiar way her adventures with "Queer Pets at Marcy's," and many others.

Other Essay-naturalists

"Little Brothers of the Air," "Little Folks in Feathers and Fur," "Bird Ways," and "In Nesting Time," are some of her best books. A charming report of the tender and beautiful aspects of nature is "The Friendship of Nature," by Mabel Osgood Wright, whose other books, such as "Birdcraft" and "Four-footed Americans," are rapidly winning over hearts to her outdoor friends. A farmer essayist, like Burroughs, is Charles C. Abbott, whose essays are persuasive inducements to join him in the enjoyment of "Days Out-of-Doors," "Outings at Odd Times," "Travels in a Tree-top," or "The Freedom of the Fields." A peculiar interest attaches to the books of Rowland Robinson, arising from the fact that after being stricken with blindness, he described nature with marvelous minuteness and accuracy, writing out of the fullness of a memory sustained by love. A passage from "In New England Fields and Woods" will illustrate the sensitiveness to nature's obscurest activities that characterizes not only his writing, but that of all the essay-naturalists: —

When the returned crows have become such familiar objects in the forlorn, unclad landscape of early spring that they have worn out their first welcome, and the earliest songbirds have come to stay, in spite of inhospitable weather that seems for days to set the calendar back a month, the woods invite you more than the fields. There nature is least under man's restraint, and gives the first signs of her reawakening. In windless nooks the sun shines warmest between the meshes of the slowly drifting net of shadows. There are patches of moss on

gray rocks and tree-trunks. Fairy islands of it, that will not be greener when they are wet with summer showers, rise among the brown expanse of dead leaves. The gray mist of branches and undergrowth is enlivened with a tinge of purple. Here and there the tawny mat beneath is uplifted by the struggling plant life below it, or pierced through by an underthrust of a sprouting seed. There is a promise of bloom in blushing arbutus buds, a promise even now fulfilled by the first squirrel-cups just out of their furry bracts and already calling the bees abroad. Flies are buzzing to and fro in busy idleness, and a cricket stirs the leaves with a sudden spasm of movement. The first of the seventeen butterflies that shall give boys the freedom of bare feet goes wavering past like a drifting blossom.

A true descendant of old Isaac Walton has appeared in Henry Van Dyke, for old Isaac loved the beauty and poetry of rippling water and velvet-turfed banks as much as he loved the shining fish. The more obvious literary intention of "Little Rivers" and "Fisherman's Luck" places them somewhat apart from the work of the naturalists. The lift that comes to flagging spirits from such books as these is like a whiff from a fresh mountain breeze, that on its way to the valley has stolen the odors of wild grape and linden. A peculiarly delightful combination of fancy and naturalistic fact has been produced by Ernest Thompson Seton, who has suddenly captivated the public with "Wild Animals I have Known," and "Lives of the Hunted." To art as well as to science and literature belong the charming books of William Hamilton Gibson, "Sharp Eyes," "Eye-spy," "My Studio Neighbors," and others, illus-

Three Special Lovers of Nature

trated with loving fidelty by the author's own brush and pencil. Such books as these broaden life and make it sweeter and happier.

A class of very useful and attractive scientific books for unscientific readers is represented by Mrs. Dana's (Mrs. F. T. Parsons) "How to Know the Wild Flowers" and "How to Know the Ferns," Alice Lounsberry's "Guide to the Trees," Neltje Blanchan's "Bird Neighbors" and "Nature's Garden," Frank M. Chapman's "Bird Studies with a Camera," W. J. Holland's "Butterfly Book," Samuel H. Scudder's "Frail Children of the Air," and A. Radclyffe Dugmore's "Bird Homes." Such books as these lie along the borderlands of literature, rendering, however, a very definite service to culture. They are cleverly devised enticements to draw people into the fields and woods, to convert the listless reader of summer novels into a wide-awake observer of nature. They serve to convict one of his ignorance of the common things in nature about him, and to destroy the force of the usual apology for such ignorance. They furnish easy introductions to the little people of field, forest, and sky, the value of whose ministrations to man we are just beginning to comprehend.

Delightful Guidebooks

From present tones and tendencies it is impossible to deduce any consistent theory or conclusion respecting the immediate future of American literature. There is a widely diffused and energetic exercise of

literary talent, but its force is largely dissipated in the trivial service of the hour. The concentration of purpose that constitutes the better part of genius, the serious discipline of taste, the austere devotion to high ideals, the self-sacrificing rejection of the advantages of temporary success in the hope of grasping the remoter possibilities of permanent fame, elements that always go to the making of masterpieces, are conspicuously wanting in our present literary activities. A vigorous, vivid contemporaneity seems mainly to characterize the literary products of the period. The multitudinous energies of journalism are transforming and absorbing the energies of pure literature; and through the agencies of the ubiquitous newspaper and the public school a vast reading public has been created, which appears to be dominated by the tastes and standards represented by that ideal product of democracy, the "average man." The final effect upon literature of the interaction of these three tremendous forces — free schools, journalism, and democracy — is matter for interesting speculation. But the question can be only speculative, for there are no precedents in the history of the world's literature by which the judgment can be guided.

The Present and the Future

For a number of years we seem to have been living in the twilight of that glorious day when the New England poets were in full voice, and Tennyson in old England was leading the Victorian choir. We have

been eagerly watching for signs of the new day. But it may be that what we have regarded as evidences of a transition period are in reality the beginnings of an era of democratic diffusion and mediocrity. The old generation of poets has passed away. Of the second generation Stoddard, Stedman, and Aldrich are now gone, and we wait expectantly for new voices. There is little creative power manifest in poetry, and no significant products. There is some good work in history, and the field of biography is not altogether neglected. The revival of the drama, so confidently promised by Stedman many years ago, is still a forlorn hope. The only great literary successes are in fiction, and the character of these successes is strongly significant of the literary conditions of the period A voracious public appetite for intellectual entertainment is an irresistible incentive to the mind of the prolific novelist. The superior intelligences, baffled in their pursuit of high aims, yield to the temptation of popular demand, and become pupils rather than instructors of popular tastes. Nevertheless, whether we regard prevailing tendencies as transitional, or experimental, or indicative of new standards, in the profusion and alertness and high average merit of the writing of the day there is ground for hope and confidence. There is a periodicity in the production of the finest fruits of art, as in the production of the finest fruits of nature; the springs of national genius are intermittent, and may be trusted to fulfill the law of their

being. As the gateway of a new century opens, we may reasonably expect to catch inspiring glimpses of the delectable mountains, at no great distance away, with crests already tinged with the ruddy hues of a new morn.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

From the following list of books a liberal selection should be made for the school library, to supplement the text work in American literature. The most valuable, that is, those that should be procured first, are marked with an asterisk. A few of these books are out of print, and therefore unprocurable; but these will be found in all large libraries, and therefore have been included in the list for purposes of reference and critical comparison.

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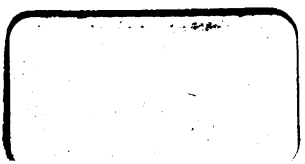
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